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FLORENCE.

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FLORENCE

THE NEW CAPITAL OF ITALY.

BY

CHARLES RICHARD WELD.

60677
ac.

'But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,
Where the Etrurian Atheps claims and keeps
A softer feeling for her fairy halls.
Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps
Her corn, and wine, and oil, and Plenty leaps
To laughing life, with her redundant horn.
Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps
Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,
And buried Learning rose, redeem'd to a new morn.'

BYRON.

B.1235
RX. 1. 41

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1867.

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TO

HENRY JOHN BARRETT

THIS BOOK

IN MEMORY OF MANY DAYS

OF

PLEASANT TRAVEL AND WARM FRIENDSHIP

IS

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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FLORENCE

THE NEW CAPITAL OF ITALY.

CHAPTER I.

Across the Apennines—From Bologna to Florence—A Patriotic Florentine—Engineering Difficulties—The Val Reno—Numerous Tunnels—Marzabotto—M. Aria's Villa—Remarkable Collection of Antiquities—Huge Locomotives—Porretta—Sulphurous Springs—The Crest Tunnel—A Dish of Crows' Gizzards—Campaniles—Val Brana—Val Pistoia—Arrive at Florence.

It was on an evening in the early part of last winter, as the train which had been serpentining up the Apennines shot out of the tunnel piercing the crest of the pass between Bologna and Florence, that a Florentine with whom I had travelled from the former city pointed energetically to the west, and exclaimed, 'See, our country will be as glorious as yonder sky!'—'Amen to that!' I involuntarily replied. And truly if the future of Italy be but half as glorious as the spectacle that drew the above remark from this zealous son of Italy, she will not

only lift her head high, but be a very shining light among nations.

We had struck into conversation shortly after leaving Bologna, and having touched on various subjects, had settled down to discuss the future of Italy, and more especially that of Florence with reference to the probability of her remaining the capital of that kingdom. All misgivings respecting the unity of Italy were combated by the Florentine with great ability, and when I ventured to question the power of the Italian Government to annex the Papal States, shrivelled as they are compared to their former extent, my companion became intensely excited, declaring with that native eloquence, accompanied by gesticulation, common to Tuscans, 'We will not only have Rome but Venetia also; and ——' when, plunging into the crest tunnel, a roar of echoing sound cut further remarks ruthlessly short. What might have followed had my companion not been thus rudely interrupted I cannot say, but presently a dawn of amber light flushed the gloom, and when we emerged from the archway, I saw the west blazing in golden glory. My friend, evidently moved by the gorgeous spectacle, drew, as I have said, my attention to it; but needlessly, for ere his quick arm had seized mine, my gaze was

riveted on the glorious scene. Above, a sky of blue and amber, changing to gorgeous crimson in the west, and many hundreds of feet below, the far-famed valley of Pistoia, one of God's choicest gardens in lovely Italy; more beautiful, too, contrasted with the country through which we had been passing, the prominent features of which are savage gorges, wild defiles, and steep precipices.

The time was, and only a few months ago, when the journey from Bologna to Florence was a formidable affair, requiring, if travelling Vetturino, two very long days; the distance being seventy-two miles, and rarely accomplished, even in the most expeditious diligence, under sixteen hours. Now, thanks to the never-tiring iron horse and clever engineers, you are conveyed over the recently opened line between the above cities in five hours, but, unless you are one of those fast individuals, who would, if possible, travel with the velocity of a ball from an Armstrong gun, you would willingly double the time; for the journey is one of great interest.

That man was indeed bold who first conceived the idea of throwing a railway across and through this part of the Apennines; for although railways have been carried over loftier elevations than these,

I apprehend few mountains have presented more formidable difficulties than the Apennines, between Bologna and Pistoia. If you have travelled over those apparently interminable plains between Turin and the former city, enclosed by the sweeping loop of the Alps and Apennines, you doubtless experienced a yearning to exchange their dull level monotony for the surrounding mountains. Now, the wish may be easily gratified. The train pauses for a few minutes at Bologna, and then turning south enters the Val Reno, and is soon in the gorges of the Apennines.

Were Italy Yankee land, you would have free liberty to make far better acquaintance with this remarkable railway than is possible under Italian regulations. For in that republican country you are permitted to ride on a platform outside the cars—an admirable locomotive coign of vantage, of which I availed myself when travelling over the wonderful line which crosses the Alleghanies at an elevation of 2,400 feet, between Wheeling and Cumberland. But not without incurring risk, as a notice hung within the cars considerately informs travellers. I well remember, however, being so deeply interested by the magnificent scenery, and by observing the progress of the cars as they zigzagged up the mountain—the leviathan

camel-engine, as it is called, frequently proceeding in an almost opposite direction to the last car, on the platform of which I was riding—that I was totally unconscious of the risk of being shot down a precipice, had an accident occurred to the train—a not uncommon event in America, as I subsequently ascertained by experience.

In Italy your life is considered more precious, at least you are not afforded the same facilities for shuffling off the mortal coil as are given you during travel in America. So, if curious to see the ways of the railway over the Apennines, you must make the best use that you can of your eyes through the carriage windows. Fortunately, that which I occupied only contained the patriotic Italian and myself, and thus I contrived to see more than I expected.

All through the Val Reno the engineering works are very remarkable, the line bounding repeatedly across the Reno in a very surprising manner; for the bridges are apparently of a most flimsy character, and entirely unprovided with parapets. At Panico, a small village, clinging most picturesquely to ridges, standing out from the roots of the Apennines, you leave the valley, with its mulberries and vines, and plunge into the viscera of the mountains. But soon the horse, steam-sinewed though he be, begins to feel the steep.

nature of the ascent, his groans and snorts becoming momentarily louder as he breasts the steep inclines. The Reno, shrunk to a mere babbling brook, no longer lends friendly passage to the railway: and now commences the long and almost endless series of tunnels. Forty-six of them lie between Panico and Piteccio, and so frequently do they occur that you are no sooner out of one than you seem to dash into another. The majority are of considerable length, the longest 8,500 feet. Emerging from the first tunnel, the train stops at the small station of Marzabotto, affording time to see a charming little plain girdled by hills and mountains. On the summit of one of the former stands the villa of M. Aria, one of the most zealous archæologists in Italy. In this eyrie M. Aria has brought together a remarkable collection of Etruscan and other objects in marble, pottery, bronze and gold, consisting principally of sepulchral remains discovered in the adjacent valleys. The collection, one of the finest and most instructive in the north of Italy, is liberally thrown open to visitors, and as its existence is very little known, I take this opportunity of thus introducing it to archæological travellers.

Up, still up, the gradient increasing until it attains the great inclination of twenty-five milli-

mètres in each mètre. This excessive gradient rendered it absolutely necessary that the trains should be light and flexible, so as to allow them to follow the extremely sharp railway curves; and also that they should be drawn by engines differing in many respects from ordinary locomotives. Their machinery is highly ingenious. The greater portion was invented by M. Beugniot, chief engineer in the famous locomotive works of M. Koechlin at Mühlhausen, which now supply a vast number of locomotives to continental railways. M. Beugniot is doubtless a very clever man, but he cannot be complimented on his artistic genius as displayed in these Apennine locomotives. Under no circumstances, probably, can a locomotive be considered beautiful, for even when decked with flowers and fluttering all over with gay flags, the hard ugly lines of the severe mechanism crop out; but assuredly the locomotives which run between Bologna and Florence are among the most hideous that have ever been constructed. They always reminded me of a monstrous hippopotamus, so low, massive, and ungainly is their appearance.

At length we arrived at Porretta, the Barèges of the north of Italy, the sulphurous springs of which, having long been celebrated for their healing

powers, will now be doubtless more frequented. But, it would require great faith in their efficacy to sojourn here long; for, although the scenery is extremely grand, the country is not precisely that in which you would care to spend many days.

Above Porretta the engineering difficulties were of a most trying nature. On one side you hang over dizzy precipices, down which dash tiny cataracts, wondering how you arrived on their heights; and, looking ahead, you see lofty giants crested with white; for in winter the peaks of the Apennines wear their snow robes. The locomotive sends forth a mighty steam blast, the martial trump of mechanical science, as it gathers strength to make the last ascent. You fancy the train will be dashed to pieces, so impassable seem the great rock walls before it, when a sudden turn discloses a dark defile; through this we glide, and then enter the long crest tunnel, lighted fitfully by shafts piercing the mountain. Here we are 2,005 feet above the sea, not, it is true, a great Alpine elevation; but it may be safely predicted that there will be few localities of a more precipitous nature in the proposed lines over the Mont Cenis or the St. Gothard than those encountered in this passage of the Apennines. Apart from the mountainous nature of the country, the geological features presented

formidable difficulties; and M. Paulin Talabot, surveyor, and Signor Luigi Protche, head engineer, deserve the highest credit for having successfully overcome them. Of these, seated in the comfortable railway carriage, you may be said to be almost entirely ignorant; but, having in former years made personal acquaintance with this part of the Apennines by walking across them near the line of the present railway, I can personally vouch that the difficulties were of no common order.

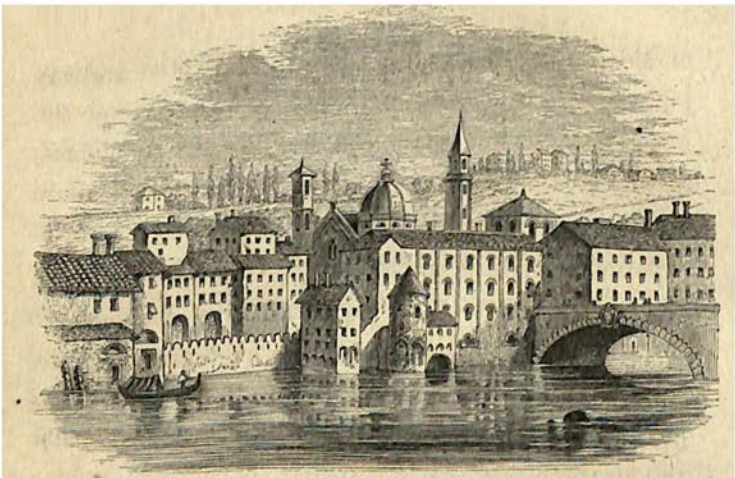
It is indeed almost impossible to realise now what the journey from Bologna to Florence was. Mr. Beckford, who made it in the early part of September, writes:—'As we continued ascending throughout the day, the scenery increased in sterility and desolation; chill winds blew from the highest peaks of the Apennines, and made a dismal rustle through the woods of chestnut that hung on the mountains side, through which we were forced to pass. It was midnight before we emerged from this forest, and saw faintly before us an assemblage of miserable huts, where we were to sleep. This wretched hamlet is suspended on the brow of a bleak mountain, and every gust shakes the whole village to its foundations. At our approach two hags stalked forth with lanterns, and invited us with a grin, which I shall always

remember, to a dish of mustard and crows' gizzards—a dish I was more than half afraid of tasting, lest it should change me to some bird of darkness condemned to mope eternally on the black rafters of the cottage. After repeated supplications we procured a few eggs, and faggots to make a fire.'

This hamlet still clings to the bleak mountain-side, and the pedestrian tourist who may be curious to become acquainted with crows' gizzards, will probably find them there; for change is slow in the unfrequented parts of Italy: but of the village the railway traveller will see nothing, and long before the hour that Beckford sat down to his modest supper, he will be at Florence.

The train now glided down the south slopes of the Apennines; a softer air came through the windows of the carriage, and the eye reposed on less severe mountain outlines. Small villages, crowned by slender campaniles, nestled in hollows, and when the train stopped at the stations the mellow-toned bells vibrated far in the mountain air. Baby rivers murmured, gathering strength as they plunged down the steeps, every available part of which was made fruitful by the hardy peasants; dimly seen, however, for now the evening was fast merging into night, blotting the fair landscape, of which the eye was

reluctant to lose a single feature. And so, down the Val Brana, passing a viaduct that literally seems to hang vertically over Pistoia, and near a lofty tower erected on the site of the memorable battle in which Catiline fell. Lower still we crossed a stream bearing the name of Fossa Sanguinaria, on the banks of which Roman war relics have been found; and passing through the Val Pistoia, every pore of which sends forth luxurious supplies for the wants of man, arrived, as the night fell, at Florence.



View from Hôtel de la Grande Bretagne, Lung' Arno.

CHAPTER II.

Hôtel de la Grande Bretagne—Quick Life-pulses—The Piedmontese and their Gutturals—Dialects in Italy—Crowded Streets—Via dei Bardi—Remarkable Slope—Fortezza di Belvedere—A Florence Palace—Americans in Florence—Search for Apartments—Their High Price—Casa Guidi—Inscription to the Memory of Mrs. Browning—My Quarters—The Casa Schneiderf—A Comfortable Pension—Restaurants in Florence—The Luna Trattoria—Restaurant de Paris—The Fenice—The Florence Flower-girls—Smoking at Dinner—Price of Fuel—The Eight Winds of Florence—Prices of Provisions—Cost of Living in Florence, past and present—The Sham Footman—Riding Horses—'La Traviata'—Riding Ponies—Game of Ruzzola—Rides in the Apennines.

If there be ever a time when man is disposed to join immortal Sancho Panza in blessing the inventor

of sleep, it is surely after an uninterrupted railway journey of two days and nights, varied only by the not very agreeable change from diligence to sledges, in which you are rolled, bumped, jolted, and shaken until every bone in your body is sore. Painful experience enables me to assure you that sleighing over Mont Cenis is a very different business to sleighing in the north of Europe, or Canada, where, encased in rich furs, you glide swiftly through the frosty air, over frozen snow, behind musical bells. But it is a great convenience to be able to take a through ticket from Paris to Florence, and even greater to have the power of registering your luggage, which can now be done between the two capitals; and if the journey, which is really admirably organised, were still further ameliorated by having sleeping cars on the railway, the fatigue would be greatly diminished. Why is the excellent institution of sleeping cars, which are general throughout America, not adopted by railway directors in Europe?

Throwing open the window of my room in the Hôtel de la Grande Bretagne, on the north bank of the Arno, when I woke, my eyes were blessed with that well-remembered view of the tawny river, spanned by the graceful Ponte Sta. Trinità on the right, and quaint Ponte Vecchio on the left; old buildings of

curious construction, churches and campaniles rising from the river between them, and above and beyond the grand frieze of the vast Pitti Palace, the spire-like cypresses in the Boboli gardens, and the villa-crowned heights of lovely Bellosguardo. All this was the Florence I remembered; but when I looked beneath and saw the living stream that filled the Lung' Arno in front of my hotel, I became aware that a great change had come over the recent Tuscan capital.

'Qu'avez-vous fait de cette Florence que je vous ai laissée si belle?' said Napoleon, on being apprised of certain changes that had been made in that fair city. The imperial question often occurred to me during the first days of my residence in Florence. Quick life-pulses beat in all the leading thoroughfares and it was only in streets remote from the centres of business that the repose which remembrance associated with Florence was to be found. But while changes of the most startling nature were apparent in the city, the same blue sky and blessed sunshine that robbed former winters in Italy of their northern sting were here, and if the inhabitants no longer lounged indolently by the waters of their late Arno-Lethe, it was because the tide of humanity flowed too strongly to permit such loitering. But it is

Sunday—a day when Florentines always loved to disport themselves—and you may be sure that the Piedmontese, whose gutturals may be heard hissing through the clear air,* are as fond of being abroad on this day as the Tuscans.

It was positively refreshing, after being buffeted by the crowds filling the leading streets—for the motley inhabitants have not yet adopted the practice of keeping to the right as they walk through them—to turn aside into the silent and solemn Via dei Bardi. The name is suggestive of business, banks, and heaps of gold, the ring of which you almost expect to hear as you pass the portals of its palaces; for it is derived from the Bardis, one of the four early great Florentine banking-houses, just as our Lombard Street is called after the Lombardian money-lenders, who originally occupied that thoroughfare. But the contrast between the two streets is great. For, while Lombard Street may be compared to a river of gold, on the banks of which human beings swarm, coming and going like restless ants, the Via dei Bardi is a very Lethe, animated only by

* A recent publication of the Statistical Government Department in Florence states that, considered in a philological point of view, there are six dialects in Italy; viz. the Italian-Celtic, the Ligurian, the Tusco-Roman, the Neapolitan, the Sicilian, and the Sardinian.

the unfrequent passage of a carriage, or a few pedestrians, who stroll lazily over its broad flags. Think not, however, that although the street is thus unpeopled and silent, that its houses and palaces are equally dull. Pass with me beneath that lofty arch, crowned by the covered passage leading from the Pitti Palace to the Palazzo Vecchio, and let us go up the street. Palaces rise on either hand, with massive stone fronts, resembling fortress walls, overhung by vast penthouse eaves, but broken up at the rear into picturesque irregularities, consisting of wings and quadrangles, towers, buttresses, and water-stairs, which dip into the Arno, for here the river

> Strikes up the massive palace walls,
> And froths the cornice out in glittering rows
> With doors and windows quaintly multiplied.

As we proceed the street expands, and presently we step into a flood of sunshine which pours down a long slope covered with a variety of lovely flowering shrubs. Opposite this slope are two of the finest palaces in Florence. Passing through the portal of one of these, we ascend a stately flight of steps, and enter a suite of large and handsome rooms. Are you curious to know why this fair slope exists in such a street? read the inscription set up on the wall beneath it. This informs us that sixty houses, which

had been built under the slope, having fallen, in consequence of the unstable nature of the ground, Cosimo I. decreed, in 1565, that no more houses should be erected on this site; and thus the space remains unbuilt on, to the great advantage of the two opposite palaces: how long, however, they will enjoy this is now very problematical, for ground in Florence having become extremely valuable, engineering skill could doubtless render the unoccupied ground perfectly safe for building purposes.

The view of this remarkable slope, or rather hill-side, for it extends from the Via dei Bardi to the Fortezza de Belvedere, is very striking, giving you the idea that a slice of the country has made a *glissade* into the city. Fortunately for me, a valued friend occupied one of the palaces fronting it, the windows of which command the entire sweep of this lovely city garden; and how lovely it looked on the winter's day it first gladdened my eyes, is well remembered. The windows of the elegant boudoir in which I was received were open, for through them came a balmy air, warmed by a brilliant sun, set in a sky of deepest blue, and beyond, at the distance only of the breadth of the street, appeared the sloping bank, covered with flowering shrubs, and crowned by the fortress, and other

picturesque buildings. The Via dei Bardi no longer rivals golden Lombard Street; but say, in that street of money-bags, is there any bank so fair as this? And while I gazed, spell-bound, on the charming scene — more lovely in my eyes, remembering the dark smoke-laden atmosphere of London, in which I had lived a few days before—sweet organ tones came floating through the rooms. 'It is the organ in the neighbouring church,' said my friend. 'Follow me.' We passed through adjoining rooms of vast size, in the most distant of which was a small door, communicating with a closet, commanding the interior of a church, but divided from it by a richly wrought-iron grating, bearing the arms of the proprietor of the palace. The closet was appropriately fitted up for religious worship, and through the grating I saw the organ from which the melodious strains proceeded.

In these pleasant rooms I spent many hours during my abode in Florence. And thus you see that the Via dei Bardi is not, under all aspects, the dull and gloomy street that it appears to the casual passer through it.

But we must not dally longer here now, for we have to find a lodging. In the ducal days of Florence, this would have been an easy task, but now

not only are apartments, furnished or unfurnished, most difficult to be obtained, but, when found, the price demanded is enormous. Being aware of this fact before I commenced my search, I do not think that I should have left the comfortable Hôtel de la Grande Bretagne, had it not been that the normal condition of hotels, as regards the guests, at this establishment was entirely at issue with facts. At a continental *table d'hôte* you naturally expect to meet a polyglot of nations, and this, unless your knowledge of modern languages be unhappily limited to your own, is one of the pleasing phases of hotel life. But at the Hôtel de la Grande Bretagne, of a party of twenty-eight who sat down to dinner, twenty-seven were Americans. Now far be it from me to depreciate the American character or country —a grateful recollection of pleasant months spent in the United States, during which time I enjoyed much genial hospitality, would stay my pen, were I disposed to write bitter or sharp words. But all will allow that you may have too much of even a good or great thing, and I confess that to be obliged to listen during a long *table d'hôte* dinner to people 'triumphing in the splendour of immeasurable habitation, and haughty with hope of endless progress and irresistible power,' was too much for my philosophy. Of

course, I early acknowledged that the re-United States, north, south, east, and west, form an almighty country; but the demands on my admiration were so frequent, and, I must add, embarrassing, that I felt the comfortable independence of an inn was not to be enjoyed by me at the Grande Bretagne. Why, it occurred to me frequently during my residence in Florence, where Americans outnumbered the English, are these people at the trouble and expense of making long journeys and voyages to Europe, when, according to their own showing, their country is immeasurably superior to all others in the world? Can it possibly be that, after all, there are advantages in poor old effete emasculated Europe, as our quarter of the globe is not unfrequently called by patriotic Americans, that are not to be found in the land of 'immeasurable habitation?' Let Europe take comfort, for assuredly there must be some charms yet remaining to her, or she would not be honoured as she is by visits from thousands of Americans. So I determined on leaving the Grande Bretagne, but where to go was the question. For although I had the advantage of the services of my friend's chief servant, a Florentine, and owner of a large house in the city, long drives and walks in search of lodgings only led to my practically experiencing the truth

of what I had often heard, that, in the city of flowers, the demand during the past winter for this accommodation, greatly exceeded the supply. It was amazing to find the prices asked for rooms. Remembering former days, when suites were to be had for less than is now demanded for a couple of small apartments, it was positively startling to hear the prices required for the latter.

I flattered myself that I had found what would have suited in the Casa Guidi at the corner of the Via Maggio, but the rent was so exorbitant, that I turned quickly away. Probably the fact of this house bearing a record to genius on its front causes the proprietor to believe that high rents will be willingly paid for the gratification of living where Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote many of her charming poems, and where she died. Here is the inscription, set up by Florence in commemoration of these events, and if, after reading it, you should feel inclined to occupy the house, you can gratify your inclination, for it is let out in apartments.

QUI SCRISSE E MORÌ
ELIZABETTA BARRETT BROWNING
CHE IN CUORE DI DONNA CONCILIAVA
SCIENZA DI DOTTO E SPIRITO DI POETA
E FECE DEL SUO VERSO AUREO ANELLO
FRA ITALIA E INGHILTERRA.
POSE QUESTA MEMORIA
FIRENZE GRATA
1861.

Though foiled at the Casa Guidi, I obtained rooms within two doors of that house. They consisted of a sitting-room and bedroom, indifferently furnished, communicating with each other; for these it was finally arranged I was to pay 120 francs a month. A much larger sum was demanded, the promotion of Florence to metropolitan dignity having apparently made the Florentines utterly unreasonable in their demands, and it was only after long bargaining that the sum named was covenanted to be taken. I state these facts conceiving that they may be useful to others who purpose settling in Florence *en garçon* during the winter, and for the same reason, I will give a few more of my living experiences in the new Italian capital. And first as to lodgings. Though mine gave fair promise of being comfortable, the result did not justify anticipations. The proprietor of the house had never let lodgings before, but tempted by the accounts he had heard of large profits being made, he resolved on giving up his two front rooms for this purpose. But so entirely ignorant were his wife and servant of the laws of landlord and tenant, that the fact of my renting the rooms in question did not appear to deprive them, according to their notions of right, to enter them whenever they pleased. One day, when the temperature was by no means at

summer heat, the maid, a muscular, rough, and unlovely contadina, came bouncing into my sitting-room, when I was writing, and threw one of the windows violently open. As she did not close it, I rose to see what she was doing, and beheld her leaning as far out as she well could, in order to carry on a conversation with a youth in the street, whose appreciation of the beautiful could not have been of a very high order, if the girl were his sweetheart. Other discomforts followed, which culminated in the unbearable fact of occasionally locking me out, master and mistress, daughter and servant, departing together, and leaving the house to take care of itself. So, at the end of a month, I migrated to the Casa Scneiderf, Lung' Arno, No. 13, known to many of our countrymen as the Pension Molini, and which, on the death of Madame Molini last year, fell into the hands of her daughter, Madame Barbensi. Here I remained during the rest of my sojourn in Florence; and my experience of this Pension, which is considerable, justifies my strong recommendation of it. The terms are, or were last winter, eight francs a day for breakfast, luncheon, dinner, including wine, tea, and the use of two large and well-furnished drawing-rooms.

While residing in my lodgings, I never dined at

home—to have made the attempt would have involved signal failure — so, when not engaged to friends, I dined at restaurants. If partial to the Italian *cuisine*, the famous old Luna Trattoria, which retains its high prestige, will furnish you with an endless variety of comestibles. The carte enumerates a multitude of dishes sufficient to satisfy the most exacting and luxurious gastronome, and the cooking, according to my experience, is excellent. Some dishes will probably remind you of Bouillabaisse, described by Thackeray as consisting of—

> Green herbs, red peppers, mussels, saffern
> Soles, onions, garlic, roach, and dace;
> All these you eat at *Luna's* tavern,
> In that one dish of Bouillabaisse.

For a French *cuisine* you cannot do better than patronise the Restaurant de Paris, a new house in the Via Cerretani. Here you may obtain an extremely good dinner, consisting of a variety of dishes, for four francs, wine included; but if disposed to be economical, you will get an almost equally good dinner at the Fenice Restaurant, in the Via Calzaioli, for three francs, including wine; and as you may be curious to see what a dinner at this price consists of in the new Italian capital, here are

the dishes that were placed before me when I dined there last:—

Thin slices of raw fish	Bottle of wine
Soup	Butter
Beef	Pudding
Mutton cutlets	Cheese
Fowl	Grapes
Cauliflower	Figs
Spinach	Apples
Potatoes	Oranges
Bread *à discrétion*	Almonds

Should you, however, be a disciple of Brillat Savarin, who held that 'la gastronomie transcédentale' is paramount to all other earthly considerations, and further hold, with Voltaire, that

un bon cuisinier est un mortel divin,

and that his *œuvres* should be served in magnificent halls, you will be able to satisfy this condition to a considerable extent at Doney's Restaurant, where you may dine *en prince* in gilded rooms, but for the privilege of which you will have to pay as well as for your dinner.

Two nuisances accompany dining in Florence restaurants; the one, smoking, in which the guests indulge as soon as they have swallowed their dinner, the other the flower-girls—

Who disturb your repose with pecuniary views,
Flinging flowers on your plates and then bawling for sous

This is not, however, strictly true, for although the girls do fling flowers, they do not bawl for sous, but leave payment to your generosity.

It may seem somewhat hard-hearted to regard these girls, or women, rather, as a nuisance; and if they were more modest and less plain you would probably not include them under this category.

There is probably no domestic article that has increased so enormously in price in Florence as fuel. This, with rare exceptions, where coal or coke are burnt, consists of wood, now becoming extremely scarce on the neighbouring mountains. This scarcity is attributed by some to the French, who are said to have wantonly destroyed vast forests in that peninsula. More probably, however, the scarcity is due to the blunder made in Tuscany of heavily taxing forest property; thus causing, in many cases, forests to be forfeited to Government in default of the payment of taxes, and, when not forfeited, often sold at a considerable sacrifice. War has also borne hard on the forests in Italy. Ten thousand stately walnut trees have been lately cut down to supply gun-stocks.

Thus, if you wish to be economical, you will do well, when seeking lodgings in Florence during winter, to select a locality commanded by the sun—though

for this natural heat you will have to pay—and protected as far as possible from the eight winds for which Florence is celebrated.* And now, supposing that you have found comfortable quarters, here are the prices of the principal articles of consumption:—meat, 6*d.* to 7*d.* a lb.; fowls, 9*d.* a lb.; butter, 1*s.* 2*d.*; sugar, 5*d.*; tea, 4*s.*; bread, a little below English prices. Wine may be had at all prices, from that of the country at 3*d.* a bottle, to the finer kinds at as many shillings. All these articles are lower without the octroi: consequently, if you live in a villa beyond the line of this municipal tax, your house expenses will be less. Women-servants receive about 16*s.* a month. But ere this you have probably made up your mind to bid adieu to all idea of economising under the blue skies of the Valdarno, and to the *tempi beati*, when '4,000 crowns was a good income in Florence, equal to as many thousand pounds in England; 200 crowns a year paid for a coach and pair of horses, including the coachman: a footman received sixty crowns, and a maid forty.'†

* These are the N., or Tramontana, from the mountains; N.E., Greco; E., Levante; S.E., Sirocco (a very hot dry wind, from whence the Italians say of a dull man, He was born 'in tempo del sirocco'); S., Mezzogiorno; S.W., Libeccio, Lybian, or African; W., Ponente; and N.W., the Maestro, or Master wind, called also the Mistral.

† *Beckford's Familiar Letters from Italy.*

'In those days,' adds the authority just quoted, 'a Florentine nobleman agreed with his cook to provide dinner and supper for a party at the rate of three pauls a head (1*s.* 3*d.*) for both.'

But the income of these Florentine nobles was great compared to that at a corresponding period of the nobility of Pisa, who, says the same authority, were deemed rich on 1,200 crowns a year. It is to be apprehended, however, that they sometimes found it difficult to keep up appearances on this sum. The widow of a nobleman in that city, says Mr. Beckford, who could not well afford two footmen behind her carriage, and knew that one only was necessary, had a figure stuffed with straw to answer the purpose of the other. The invention succeeded admirably, till one unlucky day, making a visit near a stand of hackney coaches, one of the half-starved animals smelt out the straw, and ate up the footman.

One more hint ere I close this chapter. If fond of riding—and by this I do not mean frequenting the Cascine, but exploring the environs of Florence, which abound in interest and charming scenery—you will do well not to hire your steed from the livery stables in the city. As a rule, the horses kept there are perverse in their ways, unused to the

country, and expensive. Such at least is my practical experience. A mare that I rode, and which came from one of the best stables, though promising in appearance, was endowed with so many bad qualities, that I rated the livery stable-keeper soundly for having given me such an animal. 'Well, sir,' was his reply, 'she is certainly somewhat peculiar in her ways, and is not quite so good-tempered as we could wish; but then, signor, she is, as you will admit, very handsome, and we call her La Traviata.' In Rome they manage these things better, but then they have no Campagna at Florence, and no hunt.

By a little trouble you will, however, be able to hire excellent ponies in Florence, admirably adapted for mountain work. For an animal of this description I paid four francs for the half day. Be cautious how you proceed on the roads or lanes near Florence. The youth of that city are very fond of playing a game called Ruzzola, which however pleasant and exciting it may be to them, may prove destruction to you. The game consists in rolling a cheese on a road, generally downhill, by means of a broad string wrapped round the cheese, the outer end of the string being attached to the wrist of the thrower; whoever succeeds in rolling the cheese

farthest being entitled to it as his prize. By this means the cheese can be rolled by a strong arm on a smooth road an amazing distance, and as the thrower increases the momentum by running when the cheese is discharged, you may imagine that such a missile, striking your horse's legs, is very likely to bring steed and rider to sudden grief, particularly as the cheese comes bounding along so swiftly, as to render it almost impossible to see the rolling mass before you are too late to turn aside. Such a game you will say should be prohibited, at all events near Florence—for no caution whatever appears to be exercised in playing it—but so should many other things of even greater moment than this.

You will probably be advised not to extend your rides far from Florence, as you may fall into the clutches of brigands. My experience, however, leads me to doubt the possibility of your meeting with any adventure with those gentlemen; and I think that you may ride far and wide without incurring any risk of your wife being scared by receiving your ears in a neat packet.

It is possible indeed that if you halt at some remote inn on the slopes of the Apennines you may be reminded by the wild appearance of the landlord of the famous innkeeper in Fra Diavolo,

who exclaimed, when a traveller alighted at his door, with portentous meaning,—

Una fortuna è questa.

But landlords in the Apennines near Florence are not brigands in disguise, and you may go to sleep beneath their roof in perfect security.

Back of Via dei Bardi.

CHAPTER III.

Changes in Florence—Crowded Thoroughfares—Reckless Driving—The New Police—Scavengers—The Corsi Palace—Palace Wine-taps—New Shops—Ancient Law respecting Bankrupts—The young Bohemians of Florence—Their Playing-ground—The Mercato Vecchio—Butchers' Shops—Small Birds—Vendors of Knives—A dangerous Weapon—The Ghetto of Florence—Edicts respecting the Jews—A Salted Jew—Old Clothes' Shops—Curiosities—Synagogues—Names of Streets—Mediæval Restorations—The Loggia del Bigallo—Project of adding a Spire to Giotto's Campanile—Façade of the Duomo—Cenacolo in Ancient Refectory of former Convent of Santa Croce—Florence Land and Public Works Company—Destruction of Ancient Walls—New Boulevard and Squares—Protestant Cemetery—Number of Burials—Tombs of Walter Savage Landor, Southwood Smith, Mrs. Browning—Proposed new Quarter—Nature of Houses—New Thoroughfares—Proposed Hotel at Fiesole—Want of a large Hotel near Florence.

LET us now take a stroll through the city, and mark what changes have come over it. It is Monday morning; the holiday crowds of yesterday are gone, but in their place business men come and go, rendering the thoroughfares difficult to get through; dangerous withal, for nearly every moment barrocinis—small country carts, drawn by waspish-looking little horses—are driven furiously, to the imminent

risk of knocking down Victor Emmanuel's subjects. For you will remember that the streets in Florence are paved with large flags, over which carriages proceed almost noiselessly, and, with rare exceptions, there are no *trottoirs* to protect pedestrians. The number of accidents arising from furious driving last winter in Florence was extraordinary. Scarcely a day passed without one or more persons being knocked down, and often seriously injured.* 'Are there no police?' you may ask. Yes, there are; and when you are told that they invariably patrol the streets in pairs, you would naturally suppose that they could and would stop such dangerous proceedings as these. But were you to see them, you would probably speedily come to a very different conclusion, for more inefficient public officers were never entrusted with authority than these fellows. If you ask what they are like, I should say that they bear a very great resemblance to diminutive undertaker's mutes. Where the municipality procured such a body of puny men, it is difficult to conceive, for

* Perhaps, however, the state of things is not so bad as the danger formerly incurred by pedestrians in Florence from broken crockery, &c. thrown from windows into the streets. Beckford tells us that his son's tutor received the contents of a certain implement which rendered him quite unfit for company for several hours after.

Tuscans generally exceed them in stature. Without exaggeration, it may be said that one stalwart London policeman would be a match for three of those in Florence. Their dress, too, is nearly as singular as their persons. They wear a great coat descending to the heels, and carry a metal-headed cane nearly as long as that placed in the hands of 'Jeames,' when he exhibits his exuberant calves behind my lady's carriage. Anything more useless than these canes cannot well be conceived. In a fray, they would soon be wrested from the hands of these policemen; a *tour de force*, however, not very likely to be tried, as these men have a very strong belief in the wisdom of the maxim that 'discretion is the best part of valour.' At least, if half the reports respecting them be correct, they have a knack of disappearing from the scene of brawls, and especially when knives are brought into play. Without vouching for the absolute truth of this statement, I can aver that I frequently met these men at night in by-streets, on my return home from parties, loitering in a most *dolce far niente* manner, and occasionally smoking—an indulgence not probably included among the municipal police regulations.

Coeval with the existence of this city force, is the introduction of scavengers, to whom the cleansing of

the streets is entrusted. Provided with hand-carts for the reception of mud and dust, these men may be seen all through the day wielding enormous brooms in the manner of a scythe, raising, in dry weather, by their long sweep, dense clouds of dust, to the great discomfort of all pedestrians within its influence. Why the streets should not be efficiently cleaned at an early hour of the day, as they are in Paris, is of course a question likely to arise. But we must not go beyond our own metropolis to become aware that the ways of municipalities are extremely incomprehensible, and often 'past finding out.' Perhaps, when the capital is put in order, this matter will be reformed. Indeed you are constantly struck as you pass through the streets with the unsettled state of things; Florence being very much in the condition of a boy who has outgrown his clothes, which are far too small for his limbs, and consequently extremely uncomfortable.

Let us hope that, among other changes, the police may be improved in efficiency and *physique*. Were the soldiers of this young kingdom like the present force, she would make but a poor figure, should she find it necessary to resort to arms to hold her place among the great powers of Europe.

The four stone bridges are wholly insufficient to

conveniently accommodate the traffic passing across the Arno, and the two suspension bridges are too remote from the seats of business to be of any material relief to their neighbours. Besides, tolls are levied on both these passages; and your Florentine has a very great dislike to payments of this kind, time with him being a very secondary consideration to money. The transit of the Ponte alla Carraia is indeed dangerous, for the bridge is so narrow, and badly paved, and the traffic over it so great, that foot-passengers often run considerable risk of being crushed against the parapet, when crossing it. All day long carts heavily laden with building stone pass this bridge, and the vehicles are frequently so crazy that they continually impress you with the notion, as they flounder along, emitting dull groans and creaks, that they will certainly fall to pieces.

An important alteration has been made in the Via Tornabuoni by throwing back the façade of the Corsi Palace, to the great relief of the human tide flowing through that portion of the city. Happily, the adjoining grand, though severe, Palazzo Strozzi, with its quaint corner lanterns and boss-covered rings, is left intact. It is indeed highly gratifying to find that the contemplated improvements will not injure the exterior of the fine old palaces in

Florence. There they stand, apparently unimpaired by time, noble monuments of the middle ages, sublime in their simplicity, and delighting us by their grand masses of light and shade; for, as Mr. Ruskin truly says, 'shade is a more necessary and more sublime thing in an architect's hands than in a painter's.'

Still, too, in many of these palaces, the wine and oil of the proprietor's estates are sold, an inscription over a small wicket near the great entrance announcing, 'Vendità di Vini nostrale, e Olio,' with the occasional business-like addition, *a prezzi discreti*; and such is the renown of some of these palace 'taps,' that you will generally see customers at the little wickets purchasing wine, in quantities varying from barrels to single glasses.

The most striking feature, however, in Florence, is the opening of new and splendid shops, rivalling in many instances those of Paris and London. Before these, curious groups are gathered all day, gazing wistfully at the rich contents so temptingly displayed, that I apprehend many persons are led to mentally break the tenth commandment. To the fair Florentines, who delight in the 'poetry of millinery motion,' these new Paris magasins of lustrous silks and satins, airy muslins, and sweet ribbons, must be especially fascinating. Their quick imagination sees in them

an entire wardrobe of dresses which would, you may be sure, speedily assume tangible form were the ways and means readily forthcoming.

Among the shops that attracted great attention last winter, was one in the Via Porta Rossa, devoted to the sale of caoutchouc articles, the vast variety of which greatly astonished the Florentines; but even more the contadini who come to the city on market days. But these new and glittering marts are few and far between. Old shops with narrow windows and dark interiors still prevail, quaint in many instances, dirty in all. In many, however, according to local traditions, large fortunes have been made, the tradesmen being probably incited to honest industry by the old law in Florence, which ordained that all bankrupts should be publicly whipped in the Mercato Nuovo. Were such a law in force in England, we might not perhaps hear of so many large fortunes being made, but assuredly we should see fewer bankrupts in the gazette, and have less dishonesty among merchants and tradesmen.

If affected by a weak stomach, you will do well not to pry too curiously into the streets adjoining the Piazza del Mercato Vecchio. From this quarter of the city the Florentines draw their food supplies, pending the erection of a vast central market by the

municipality, and from personal observation I can attest that these shops are a disgrace to the capital of Italy. They extend on both sides of the long and narrow Via de Succhiellinai, which through the day lives out from end to end, teeming with buyers and sellers. Here, and around the pillars of the Mercato Nuovo, are the favourite playing-grounds of the *gamins* of Florence; sharp-eyed bare-footed boys of the true Bohemian breed, ever on the watch for waifs and strays, by no means uncommon in these parts.

The bronze replica of the famous white marble boar in the Uffizi, which is set up at one side of the Mercato Nuovo, is a great object of attraction to these juveniles, who bestride it and play all manner of acrobatic tricks on the animal's back, happily strong enough to bear all this rough usage, with impunity. All kinds of comestibles are sold here and in the adjoining street; and if you would know how fruitful is the Val d'Arno, pass slowly early in the morning through this artery of life. To the vegetable and fruit stalls, heaped high with every description of garden produce, no exception can be taken, but the butchers' shops reek with foul abominations. It will be long before these rival those in the fashionable streets in Paris, where, as you will doubtless

remember, beef, veal, and mutton, are adorned with artificial flowers and paper lace, disposed with such artistic effect as to render the shops positively attractive.

As at Rome, you will see a great variety of birds on sale in Florence. The indiscriminate slaughter of the feathered race, without regard to size, causes birds to be lamentably scarce in Italy; but, indeed, this remark applies to almost the entire continent; the tiniest bird finding a place in the *pot-au-feu* in France, which is always available for all manner of contributions. You will see men in pursuit of diminutive birds round Florence, which even a cockney sportsman would scarcely think of molesting. Now and then, throughout the market, exposed for sale in baskets, you will find numerous knives of a very primitive construction. The hafts are generally made of walnut wood, and fitted to them, but without springs, are formidable blades about four inches in length, terminating in a sharp point. These are the knives not unfrequently used with fatal effect by the lower orders, when passion runs riot, and stirs their hot blood. Accosting a vendor of them, I demanded the price of one of the largest. 'Forty cents,' he replied, equivalent to fourpence; 'and,' he added, 'if the signor will buy the knife, I will give the blade

such an edge, that you may shave yourself with it, and a point as fine as that of a stiletto.' Agreeing to purchase the knife—for which, by the way, as I was afterwards informed, I paid too much, the price to contadini being only threepence—the man knelt before a small grindstone, and causing it to revolve rapidly, soon gave the blade an extremely keen edge. 'Eccolo, signor!' he exclaimed, 'it will now cut a sausage into slices as thin as paper; or'—and here he brandished the knife with an energy and manner that led me to believe he was well accustomed to the use of such an instrument as a weapon—'it will give your enemy a death-stroke.'

Within a few yards of the principal market street is the Jews' quarter. According to Florentine chronicles, Jews first settled in Florence in 1419. As usual, they underwent severe persecution, which culminated in their banishment in 1460. They, however, obtained permission to return to Florence in 1468, when they occupied the Via dei Giudei. But having encroached on the adjoining streets, and, according to the evidence of several Christians, committed various acts calculated to bring the Christian religion into contempt, application was made to Pope Paul IV. and a bull obtained from that Pontiff compelling them to reside apart from Christians, and,

above all, to be buried far from ground consecrated by the Catholic Church. This intolerance caused many Jews in Florence and Rome to leave money in their wills for their bodies to be carried to Jerusalem. Beckford tells us how a Jew dying in Spain in great mental agony, arising from his apprehension that his body would be as much persecuted under the earth as it had been above ground, left particular instructions that it should be conveyed to Jerusalem. But as it was impossible to get it out of Spain whole, it was cut up, pickled, placed in a barrel, and shipped in the first instance to Leghorn. When the ship arrived at that port, the merchant to whom the barrel had been consigned found it deficient in weight, and insisted on the captain making good its deficiency. 'I cannot possibly do that,' quoth the skipper, 'for that which was taken out of the barrel was eaten long ago.' 'And did you find it good?' demanded the merchant of the sailors who had made free with the contents of the barrel. 'Excellent,' they replied. 'Then,' exclaimed the merchant, 'let me tell you, it was not salted pork that you ate, but salted Jew.'

As soon as Paul IV.'s bull was issued, Cosimo I. built the present Ghetto in Florence, for the reception of the Jews. Although Ferdinand I., and suc-

ceeding Tuscan dukes, conceded various privileges to them, it was not until 1838 that the gates shutting them in their quarter at nightfall were demolished.

The Ghetto at Florence falls far short of that in Rome in interest, the Jews being neither so numerous nor so huddled together as they are in the Eternal City. There is, however, a goodly colony of Hebrews, who, true to the proclivities of their race, carry on a stirring business in money-changing, and buying and selling old clothes, and other garments and cloths of a most heterogeneous description. Threading my way through their quarter, I came frequently on bright patches of colour, produced by the exhibition outside houses, dark with the undisturbed dirt of long years, of old brocades, velvets, damasks, and silks, which had once, probably, adorned stately palace halls, or the persons of fashionable women.

Here, too, you may occasionally pick up a curiosity, not, however, in all probability, at a price below its value; for your Florence Hebrew, like his brother at Rome, is not only well acquainted with the worth of an artistic object, but also with the gullible nature of *forestieri*, and especially of Englishmen; so that if you desire to become a purchaser, you will have to submit to an almost interminable bargaining process, without which no Ghetto Jew in Florence or Rome

likes to sell; demanding, in the first instance, so exorbitant a sum, that it seems hopeless to arrive at anything like an equitable arrangement.

There are two synagogues attached to the Ghetto in Florence; both, however, are small.

Those familiar with Florence before a king occupied the Pitti Palace, will look in vain for the names of several of her well-remembered streets. Many of the leading thoroughfares bear new appellations, having reference, more or less, to recent stirring events in the history of Italy. Honour, too, has been paid to her illustrious statesmen and warriors. Thus, the former Via Larga now bears the name of Cavour, and another thoroughfare is called Via Garibaldi. To the ancient inhabitants of Florence, who have grown old under her grand dukes, these changes must be extremely distressing. For they not only see the old landmarks removed, but are unable to saunter leisurely through the streets; even the *jeunesse dorée* find it difficult to maintain possession during the afternoon of their favourite lounging place opposite Giacosi's wine and liqueur rooms, and the entrance to the Jockey Club.

But while these changes have taken place, others, that cannot fail to give general satisfaction, have been made. Restoration as applied to architecture

is but too often only another word for ruin. Mediæval restorations have, however, been effected in Florence which are highly meritorious. One of the most recent has been the reopening of the portico of that small but exquisitely beautiful structure of the thirteenth century, known as Loggia del Bigallo, on the south side of the Piazza di San Giovanni. This loggia was built from the designs of Niccolo Pisano, as a vestibule to the oratory and offices of the celebrated Misericordia Company, and having been used for many years, was closed in 1697, and remained concealed and almost unknown to the inhabitants of Florence, until very lately. The walls, built within the arches, have now been removed, and the loggia restored to its original state. Passing under the vaulting, through the richly-moulded arches, we obtain access to the entrance of the ancient oratory. This contains a group of the Virgin and Infant Saviour with two angels, attributed to Alberto Arnoldi, and on the marble altar are subjects painted by Dominico Ghirlandajo representing various pious deeds of the Misericordia fraternity.

But interesting as these are, the reopening of this loggia made a greater impression on me, in connection with the adjoining campanile of the cathedral, than from its own architectural features. From all points

of view, this 'model and mirror of perfect architecture' is a glorious object, but seen through the arches of the loggia, in the afternoon, when the sun lights up its spiral shafts and fairy traceries, is a delight the remembrance of which will long be a pleasure to you. For my own part, many a time did I go out of my way to gaze on that marvellous work of Giotto from this loggia, and always turned from it with regret. Charles V., you may remember, declared that if it were kept covered, and shown only once in several years, strangers would flock to see it. Truly few cities possess such an architectual jewel as this. Some art critics, in the spirit of hypercriticism, find fault with the campanile because it is spireless. It is true that Giotto originally designed crowning his tower with a spire, which was to have risen from the summit ninety-six feet, but the structure, as we see it, is so extremely beautiful, that the addition of a spire seems quite unnecessary. However, it is among the contemplated improvements when Florence becomes rich, and then, perhaps, we shall see Mr. Browning's conception realised:—

> To turn the bell-tower's *alt* to *altissimo*,
> And fine as the beak of a young beccaccia;
> The campanile, the duomo's fit ally,
> Shall soar up in gold full fifty braccia,
> Completing Florence, as Florence, Italy.

Far more pressing is the claim of the Duomo, the façade of which remains unfinished. In 1861 the King inaugurated the proposed alterations and completion of this building. At the same time a public subscription was organised, and Government granted a sum of money towards the expenses. Funds were also contributed by a percentage tax on wills drawn by notaries in Florence. Architects were then invited to send in designs for the façade; but, although forty responded, no decision was arrived at. Meanwhile war swallowed up the subscriptions, the affairs of the State being far more important than the completion of the cathedral. Recently, however, another competition for a new façade has been invited, and if the kingdom of Italy prospers, we may hope to see the present unsightly blot on this grand cathedral removed. There are few buildings in Europe that an architect should be more proud to leave his mark on than this; and it will be highly satisfactory should the choice of the committee appointed to consider the merits of the competing designs, fall upon an Englishman.

After long and unwarrantable delays, the ancient refectory attached to the monastery of Santa Croce has been so far divested of the rubbish that encumbered and deformed it, as to allow Giotto's Cenacolo

to be seen: for to that painter has this fine work been hitherto ascribed. How far Dante's commendatory notice of Giotto may have led many works to be ascribed to him we cannot say, but there is no doubt that several paintings attributed to Giotto are by other hands.

> Credette Cimabue nella pittura
> Tener lo campo; ed ora ha Giotto il grido,
> Si che la fama di colui oscura.

Notable experts, in the persons of Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, now tell us that this fresco is not by Giotto, but by his pupils or followers. Be this as it may, the painting is extremely interesting. The Last Supper occupies the lower portion of the wall, the central being filled by a representation of the Crucifixion. Two groups appear below the cross; among the figures are the two Maries and Saint Francis. There is great beauty in the countenances of the figures; unfortunately, several of them have suffered considerable injury from the terrible inundation of the Arno in 1557, which rose to the level of the middle of the fresco.

But by far the greatest change in the new capital of Italy is that already effected by the Florence Land and Public Works Company, who, armed with power far surpassing that of the greatest enemy of

Florence in the middle ages, have overthrown the greater portion of that cincture of castellated walls raised towards the end of the thirteenth century. This company, consisting principally of English shareholders, received a commission from the municipality of Florence, dated Sept. 7, 1865, empowering them to destroy the walls, convert their site into a boulevard, and erect houses adjoining the latter. The municipality granted the company 50,000 square mètres of land (about twelve acres and a half), on the line of the new boulevard, and have undertaken to sell them 150,000 additional square mètres at the rate of 6·50 francs per mètre.

The improvements are confined at present to the north bank of the Arno. The new boulevard, which will be planted with trees, will include in its course all the old gates, which will be like flies in the amber of modern civilisation. Some of these gates are curious in an architectural point of view, and interesting as monuments of a period six centuries removed from us. A square will be formed between the Pinto and Gallo gates, to which the name of Savonarola will be given, and the triumphal arch near the latter gate will be the centre of another large square.

The only alteration contemplated with respect to

the Protestant cemetery, adjoining the Pinti Gate, is the substitution of an ornamental iron railing lined with shrubs, for the present wall. Thus, those whose relatives or friends sleep here need be under no apprehension that their dust will be disturbed. And although a cemetery, set apart for those who have died in a foreign land, often far from all most dear to them, is an object calculated to awaken melancholy thoughts, the general aspect of this *Gottesacker* is soothing and even cheerful. The turf in midwinter is of a tender green, roses and other flowers bloom over the tombs throughout the year; and while all beneath your feet reminds you of mortality, the air is charged with vitality, the hum of flashing insects quickens the place with life-pulses, while the deep blue sky of Italy arches over all.

According to the registers, 934 persons have been buried here during the past thirty-eight years. By far the largest proportion of the monuments bear English names. With few exceptions, they are in good taste. Among the most recent are those to the memory of Walter Savage Landor, Southwood Smith, and Elizabet Barrett Browning. By a wonderful oversight, the inscription on the tomb of the former runs thus: 'Sacred to the memory of Walter Savage Landor, born Jan. 30, 1775.—Died Sept. 17, 1864. The

last sad tribute of his *coife* and children.' Strange liberties have, as is well known, been taken with names and words on tombstones, but this case of misspelling is extraordinary, and fully as surprising is the fact that it should still offend the eye. On Southwood Smith's monument are these lines by Leigh Hunt:—

> Ages shall honour, in their hearts enshrined,
> Thee, Southwood Smith, physician of mankind;
> Bringer of air, light, health, into the home
> Of the sick poor in happier years to come.

Though by no means the largest monument in this cemetery, that of the late Mrs. Browning is certainly one of the most remarkable. It consists of a massive sarcophagus of various-coloured marbles, resting on a double row of slender pillars; on each side of the sarcophagus are bas-reliefs in medallions, and a head in profile crowned with laurel, not unnaturally supposed to be a likeness of Mrs. Browning, for the only inscription on the cenotaph is E. B. B. ob. 1861. The head is not, however, that of Mrs. Browning, but a representation of the genius of poetry. The monument was designed by Mr. Leighton the artist. However essential simplicity may be in the case of a monument erected to genius, it would assuredly have been desirable to have given

Mrs. Browning's name in full, and not to leave it a matter of doubt whether the head is intended as a likeness of the person resting beneath the monument.

According to the proposed plans, the long line of houses looking south-west across the river, known as the Lung' Arno, will be prolonged to the small stream of the Affrico, and an extensive new quarter will stretch thence northwards to the Mugnone. The architecture of the buildings will be ornamental, and at the same time adapted to the climate of Florence. They will be divided into suites of apartments, adapted for large and small families, and be provided with every English comfort, including a copious supply of good water, brought from the sources of the Arno. Few cities require pure fresh water more than Florence. At present nearly all the drinking water is obtained from wells sunk in the immediate vicinity of the cesspools of the houses.

It is also proposed to make a thoroughfare between the Piazza Santa Trinità and the Piazza Signoria, by enlarging the Via Porta Rossa. Such a thoroughfare is greatly required, as the latter street is far too narrow to accommodate the present traffic.

There is a project, not however emanating from this

company, for erecting a large hotel at Fiesole, or some equally advantageous locality near Florence. Several Government employés told me that they greatly felt the want of an hotel near the city, to which they and their families could go for change of air; and there cannot be a doubt that many visitors would be glad to be able to exchange the often close atmosphere of their hotel or pension in Florence for the pure air and magnificent views obtainable on the slopes of Fiesole. A locality was pointed out to me near that town admirably adapted for such an establishment; and I was informed that 60,000 square mètres of land can be purchased there for five francs a mètre. Vast hotels do not always turn out profitable speculations, but it is the opinion of many Florentines that a large, comfortable, and well-conducted establishment near Florence where visitors might live *en pension*, as well as find temporary accommodation, would prove remunerative. That it would be a great boon to the inhabitants and visitors is unquestionable; for it is not a little remarkable that there is no large or good hotel near Florence, although few cities in Europe are set in such lovely scenery as that surrounding the new capital of Italy. As a provincial town

Florence did not probably require accommodation of this nature, but as a metropolis, and with a population, irrespective of visitors, which has suddenly increased from 115,000 to 130,000, additional hotels, as well as houses, are urgently required.

Ancient Lamp, Socket, and Ring. Palazzo Strozzi.

CHAPTER IV.

Character of the Florentines—A Gente Beffarda—The Old Grand Dukes—Their manner of Rule—Gossip in Florence—The Caffès—The Barbers—The Young Florentines and Shaving—Steele's Barber—Scandal in Florence—Its effect on Society—The British Court—Victor Emmanuel—His love for the Ballet—'Les Pieds qui r'muent'—Pretty Ballerine—Napoleon I. and the Danseuses at the Paris Opera—Moral Relations in Florence—Marriages—How managed—A Servile Cicisbeo—A Story of an Establishment at Turin—Masked and Fancy Balls—Fanciful Costumes—A Bacchante—Receptions of the British Minister—'Soft Contentments'—Beauty of the Florentines—Loud Voices—Theatres—Dinner Parties—Amusements of Men and Women—Want of a Public Garden—Florence Cremornes in Prospect.

LOOKING at Florence as the capital of a kingdom taking rank as the fifth in Europe, I certainly expected to find the Florentines gayer than they were last winter. The death of the King's son, Prince Oddone, put a stop to court entertainments, but this event had no effect on private balls and parties, which went on as usual. A keen observer of human nature has said that 'the Florentines are a *gente beffarda*, incorrigible wags, the most persistent of jokers, with light heads, saucy eyes,

elastic lips, and epigrammatic tongues.' Gaiety they must have, after their fashion; for where will you find an Italian *paterfamilias* attending to his domesticities to the extent even of spending an evening at home? But it struck me that the Florentines were not the gay creatures last winter that they were before the late rosewater revolution deprived them of a ducal court, and when the old Duke used to permeate the city in a free and easy manner, like good Haroun el Raschid, attended by his heir-apparent, now non-apparent; and let us hope for ever to continue so. For these Tuscan dukes, like many of the thirty and odd petty German dynasties and princes, have had their mission, and we shall, in all probability, see them no more. Yet it must be conceded that, as a lot, they were a well-behaved, respectable set of people, particularly when allowed to have their own way. They lived, in a great measure, *en famille* with their subjects, often full of a certain fussiness of paternal care and patriarchal tenderness, consulting their peoples' interests when these did not happen to clash with their own pleasures, and were generally careful to put by a handsome sum in the English or Dutch funds by way of provision against a rainy day.

It may be that the Florentines are oppressed by

the change that has come over their fair city, and that, in the presence of grave ministers and diplomatists, it is difficult to throw off formality. Unrestrained, they are naturally lively creatures, having great faith in their philosophical proverb, 'Cent' ore di malinconia non pagano un quattrino di debito.' Finances, state and private, may be out of joint, but your Florentine will not, if he can help it, bate his gaieties and love for display, and if by innocent sociality care can be steeped in oblivion, he cannot be deemed unwise who drinks deep of this pleasant Lethe. It was, as you may remember, this love for gaiety and show, when substantial comforts were often wanting, that led the French, during their occupation of Italy, to say of the Florentines, 'habit de velours et ventre de son.'

In one respect Florence has not changed. It remains, *par excellence*, the town, or capital rather, of gossip. Not only does everybody know everybody, but the actions of everybody are known in the most surprising manner. A certain prying, searching, gossiping surveillance is exercised over every member of the community. Everybody concerns himself more or less with his or her neighbour's doings, and acts as a kind of volunteer detective. The influence of such conduct is extremely pernicious.

The caffès are of course the chief temples of gossip among the men, but you may pick up a considerable budget of news at the barbers'; for, acting on the general Italian habit of not doing anything that you can get done for you, your young Florentine about town never thinks of shaving himself, but repairs daily to a barber's, or desires one to wait on him, in order to get rid of the hair on either side of his face, whiskers to an Italian being an abomination not to be tolerated. Frequently when undergoing the operation of having my hair cut, I have been entertained by the gossip of the *barbiere*, who often reminded me of that prince of barbers whose home was in Seville, and whose boast it was that—

> Tutti mi chiedono,
> Tutti mi vogliono;

and even more of the notable barber described by Steele in the 'Guardian,' whom he patronised, not because he handled a razor lightly, but 'because he had the reputation of knowing more about things and persons in the town where he exercised his calling than anybody else.' When Florence waxes to proper metropolitan rank and importance, this baneful provincial habit will, if not totally disappear, at least be greatly modified; and though the day may be far distant when the occupier of a house in Florence

will be, as is often the case in London, ignorant of his neighbour's name, we may take it for granted that the capital of a kingdom with a population of 25,000,000 will have something better to do than busy themselves about their neighbours' affairs.

Nor, as may be supposed, is gossip in Florence by any means charitable. Are your at a party, and, seeing an interesting-looking woman, ask your neighbour who she is, you are not only told her name, but, in all probability, a story connected with her, in which matters not always fit for publication generally occupy a prominent place. For, as intrigue does not put on much hypocrisy in Florence, scandal is consequently communicated to you without much reserve. But there is a compensating element in this detraction of character. A man or woman is made to appear so black that you take it for granted they are proscribed. Not at all: the very lady who tells you that Signora —— has a lover, with so many particulars of her amours that you fancy she must be a woman of very bad character, accosts her in the most endearing manner, and laying aside all malice, behaves as if her friend were a very pattern of domestic excellence. You must not, therefore, hope to escape the sharp tongue of gossip if you live in Florence. But be not cast down, for though you may not have a

pachyderm mind as regards the talk of your neighbours, you may be quite sure that the gossip will not prove injurious to you.

The unsullied purity of the British Court will ever be one of Queen Victoria's strongest claims to the affections of her people. The influence of such example is undoubtedly great. Florence, as is well known, possesses no such advantage. Her sovereign is certainly entitled to the love of his subjects for many good qualities, but he is not remarkable for his observance of rigid morality. With a regularity worthy of a better cause, Victor Emmanuel, when not occupied in the much more congenial pursuits of fighting or sporting, may be seen nightly at the opera, or ballet rather; for His Majesty rarely honours the opera with his presence, but comes in a few minutes before the ballet commences, at the end of the penultimate act of the opera, and leaves the house when it is over. But I rather err in stating that His Majesty can be seen on these occasions, for although lord of two boxes, one, the State box, at the centre of the bend on the grand tier, the other corresponding in position to our Queen's box in Her Majesty's Theatre, Victor Emmanuel prefers occupying a very small stage box. In this he sits, with his back to the audience,

and as he very rarely looks round, can very seldom be seen from any part of the house.

Were the author of that most French book, 'Les Pieds qui r'muent,' an Italian, and stood in need of a patron, the dedication of his work to Victor Emmanuel would have been singularly appropriate. I am not aware whether His Majesty has anything to do with the management of the ballet in Florence, but certainly the *ballerine* at the Pergola are prettier than the general run of these ladies in other theatres. It may be that he has followed the example of the first Napoleon. That emperor, who was not given to waste much time at theatres, was greatly displeased on one occasion, when, visiting the Paris opera, he saw extremely plain ballet-girls. Sending for the director, he told him to engage handsome girls forthwith: it being, in his opinion, wholly unpardonable that he should receive a large annual subvention from Government, and shock the public with the sight of so much ugliness. Whether the newly-engaged girls could dance or not, was a very secondary consideration; and as they were taken from establishments where beauty was of more consideration than dancing, it is probable that they did not do much honour to the Terpsichorean art.

Scandal being thus rampant in Florence, you may be sure that it does not spare the highest classes; and from what has been said you will be prepared to hear that the King does not escape. If one quarter of the stories told of him be true—many of which, however, dribble down the back stairs of palaces—he must be very like past sultans in one respect at least; but as, happily, there is no Bosphorus at Florence, and the Arno is not conveniently deep, ladies who are either false, or *de trop*, do not disappear in sacks.

What, then, are the moral relations in Florence? Is marriage considered—

> A matter of more worth
> Than to be dealt in by attorneyship?

I fear not; and as long as girls are provided with husbands for whom they may not have one spark of affection—and, moreover, find that by taking a lover they do not lose social position—we must expect to find those individuals who go very far to supply the place of absent or uncongenial husbands. In fact, Byron's lines hold good still on the south of the Alps:—

> I can't tell who first brought the custom in,
> But cavalier serventes are quite common.

But cicisbeism in Florence is not what it was. Cavalier serventes no longer seem vain of the servilities imposed on them by their mistresses. Forsyth tells us that he heard a lady in Florence desire her signor cavaliere to 'stir up her fire;' on which the gentleman 'put his hand forthwith under her petticoat, removed the chafing-dish, stirred the coals with a small silver shovel he kept in his pocket, replaced the pan, and re-adjusted her dress.

However disposed a Florentine may be to uphold this social custom, you will not meet such ladies as Forsyth describes, who 'clapped gentlemen on the thigh, kept conversation continually fluttering on the brink of obscenity, and often passed that line.' Nor can it be now said that Florentine ladies boast of having an amoroso, whereas formerly, as Byron states, 'the great sin seemed to lie in concealing the fact.'

But if love be often absent in wedded life, there is no doubt that Florentines are capable of great affection. Moore was cynically unjust when he wrote of them:—

> No, 'tis not the region where love's to be found.
> They have bosoms that sigh, they have glances that rove,
> They have language a Sappho's own lip might resound
> When she warbles her best, but they've nothing like love.

That the woman who is capable of deep love will

make a faithful and affectionate wife cannot be doubted; and, as the character of the softer sex is greatly moulded by man, so, when Italians wish their countrywomen to be faithful wives, they will cordially respond to the desire.

With a story that I heard from more than one quarter, I turn from this phase of Florence life. When it was resolved to transfer the capital from Turin to Florence, several gentlemen requested a lady at the head of a certain well-known establishment in the former city to migrate to the new capital. But all entreaties and persuasions were unavailing. Pressed to give a reason for her obduracy, she replied, 'How can you ask me to move my establishment to Florence, when you know well that I should obtain no patronage there?' 'Se non è vero è ben trovato' may apply to this story; but, unless my information be exceedingly erroneous, there is more than a grain of truth in it. This is certain, the lady has not removed to Florence, Turin still enjoying the questionable advantage of her cosmopolitan establishment.

Though the Italian Court was in mourning last winter, many palaces in Florence blazed with splendour. As usual, the Borghese Palace was thrown open for the two annual masked balls, one of which

all visitors to Florence should see, for the *two* ball-rooms in this building are of great size and beauty. But probably the grandest ball last winter in the Italian capital was that given by one of the great bankers of Florence, on which occasion some thirty-five rooms, besides the vast ball-room, were thrown open, the entire suite being lighted by nearly 4,000 wax candles, while the invitations exceeded 3,000. Such luxury of space we should look for in vain in the houses of even the greatest London financiers, though probably the business of one of these city kings is tenfold that of all the Florence bankers combined: but, if the London financier has more wealth, the Florentine has probably more enjoyment.

The majority of the guests at this monster ball were in fancy costumes—some, indeed, of a very fanciful description and even questionable taste. How far it may agree with Italian notions of propriety I cannot say; but we may reasonably believe that a lady attired as a bacchante in loose tiger-skins, so disposed as to exhibit great length of limb, would not be very favourably criticised or received at a private fancy ball in England. Probably, however, the costume would find favour in Paris, where ladies may be said to have gone mad on the subject of dress; and those Parisians who go down the sands at Biarritz and

Trouville, to bathe in silver sandals and scant bathing-dresses trimmed with lace, would, I apprehend, be quite at home in the costume of a bacchante.

Among the pleasant *réunions* during the season in Florence are the receptions given by our excellent minister. In consequence of a Russian nobleman having taken a dislike to Florence since it has become a capital, and left the city, his fine palace in the Via dei Servi has been appropriated to the use of the British minister. The rooms, though small in comparison to those in many of the palaces in Florence, are extremely elegant; the walls of one are hung with richly-embossed leather. At these parties you meet the upper thousand of Florence, and all who have had the pleasure of attending them will remember how admirably Mrs. Elliott discharges her duties of hostess.

Compared with the blaze of those 'soft contentments,' as eastern ladies pleasantly call diamonds, seen at the balls in Rome, those worn at the Florence balls and parties are insignificant. There are of course many rich and rare family jewels among Florentine families, but they will not bear comparison with those that dazzle your eyes in the Eternal City. But let not Florence be envious: if Rome possesses finer jewels, the City of Flowers can boast

greater beauty, Florence women being handsomer than those in Rome. If Moore be unjust to the Florentines in one respect, he only does them justice when, alluding to them, he says:—

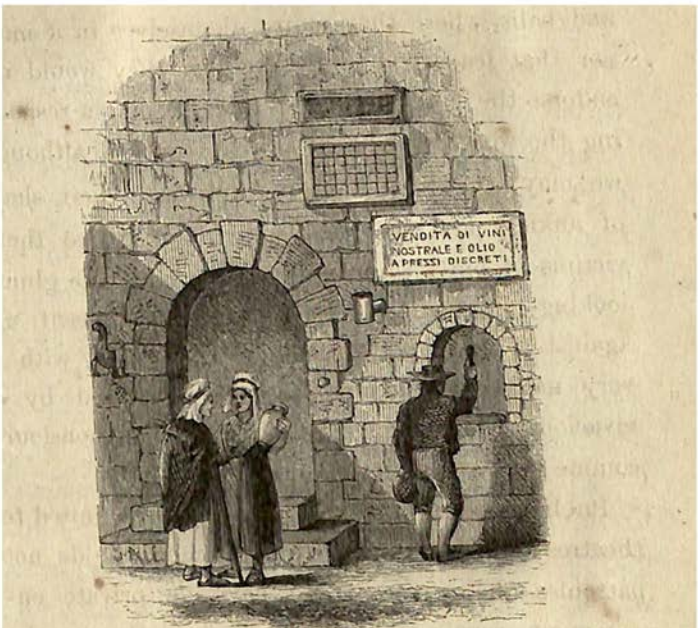
> We oft are startled by the blaze
> Of eyes that pass with fitful light
> Like fire-flies on the wing at night.

But why, oh, ye Florentines! to whom is given language of exquisite harmony, will you mar it by loud and harsh talk. The *bocca Toscana* of a young Florentine is often beautiful, but the words proceeding from it are, not unfrequently, painfully discordant. You do not, it is true, offend quite so much in this respect as Roman ladies; but still your voices are far from gentle, and would be infinitely improved by being subdued.

Late hours, which seem *de rigueur* in the fashionable world, are the rule in Florence, *réunions* rarely taking place before eleven o'clock, when the opera terminates. The London man of fashion, who assigned as a reason that he did not go to theatres because they clashed with dinner-parties, would have no such excuse in Florence, hospitality of this kind being rarely exercised. So the Florentines patronise the opera and French theatre, where they see their friends, and go from thence to parties

and balls, where they amuse themselves in a manner that leads you to believe that they would not endorse the late Sir George Lewis's opinion respecting the world and its pleasures. Indeed, although we may be sure that Florentines have their share of anxiety and trouble, you will rarely see them victims of philanthropic dissipation, like the glum-looking Englishman, who, propping himself up against a wall, and surveying the company with a very melancholy expression, was addressed by a vivacious Frenchman: 'Ah! mon cher monsieur, comme vous avez l'air de vous amuser!'

Public entertainments in Florence are limited to theatres and concerts; so all gentlemen who do not patronise these places, and have no private engagement, repair to the caffès, where they smoke 'cavours,' drink coffee or lemonade, and talk politics, while ladies who are indifferent to the drama or music, fall back on religion or love. It is a remarkable fact that throughout Italy there is but one public garden where you can hear good music and obtain refreshments: this is at Milan. But Florence as a capital is in her babyhood; and who knows but long ere she comes of age, she may have more than one Cremorne amidst the groves of the Cascine, and 'Anonymas' in the drives?



Cantina—Palazzo Quaratesi.

CHAPTER V.

The Carnival at Florence—Throwing of Bouquets and Bonbons—Carnival at Milan—Masked Balls—The Veglioni at the Pergola—A Bishop and the Cancan—Fast Characters—Suppers in the Private Boxes—An elegant Entertainment—Byron's Specific against Dulness—Masquerades at Venice—The Ridotto—Masked Balls at the Goldoni—Brawls—A fatal Quarrel—The 'Cattivi" Piedmontese.

MAY we accept the fact, that the carnival at Florence is a very tame affair now, in comparison to

what it used to be in former years, as a proof that the Florentines are wiser than their forefathers? Be this as it may, there is no doubt that, if you desire to see a mad carnival, such as are depicted in old engravings, you must not go to Florence. Even Rome, in its political bondage, manages to get up a far more stirring carnival than Florence; though it must be acknowledged that, of late years, the chief actors in the Corso revels have been English.

Miles of handsome carriages, containing well-dressed women, grave-looking men, and occasional throwing of bouquets and genuine bonbons—frequently enclosed in elegant cases—may not be a very exciting spectacle; but, after all, it is surely better than the Roman carnival, where the so-called fun consists in pelting people with chalk pellets and flour. Probably, if the Florentines had license to pelt each other in the same fashion, they would not be slow in availing themselves of the privilege; indeed, I was assured that the reason why they are debarred this pastime is, that romping playfulness would soon exceed the bounds of safety, and that, in the height of excitement, objects would be thrown of a far more dangerous nature than flowers or confetti. Although the non-throwing law

applies of course to all, it is transgressed by the higher classes, who pelt each other as they pass in carriages, or from the balconies along the line of route; but as the missiles are almost always flowers and sweetmeats, no harm is done, beyond wounds inflicted on the sensitive hearts of men by ladies, who, under the form of flowers thrown at their lovers, contrive to convey much meaning.

On the last days of the carnival, an attempt was made to create some diversion on the part of a few maskers, who passed from end to end of the Corso in quaint carriages and fanciful dresses; but it was a failure. Thus, as you see, the

> Masking and humming,
> Fifing and drumming,
> Guitarring and strumming

common to the Italian carnivals of old, is nearly at an end. Perhaps, in a few more years, the carnival will disappear entirely, and Lent along with it.

But, if Florence be tame and sedate in the streets at this season,* she amuses herself in her theatres,

* The gayest carnival at present in Italy is that at Milan, where, by a peculiar privilege, the citizens enjoy it four days longer than those of any other town in Italy. Thus, some persons leave Florence on the last day of the carnival there, and, travelling to Milan by the night train, find the Milanese, on the following day, feasting instead of fasting.

where masked balls take place. The Veglioni at the Pergola, as the masked balls at that opera-house are called, are now the best. Formerly, the price of admission to one of these entertainments was three pauls—1*s.* 3*d.*—last winter it was raised to three, and five francs. Notwithstanding the increase of price, the house was crowded.

As usual in Italy on these occasions, few men were masked, ladies being privileged to mystify their gentlemen acquaintance. Nor are they slow in taking advantage of the opportunity. Indeed, there is no social amusement to which a gay young Florentine lady looks forward with so much delight, as a Veglione. Addison tells us, in one of his charming essays on the pleasures of the world, that a fashionable lady was in greater danger of losing her life from grief by being left out of a masquerade, than Clarinda was from the violent cold she caught at it; and there is no doubt that many Florentine ladies would run serious risk of catching cold, rather than abstain from attending a masked ball during the carnival.

As a matter of course, the company is very mixed on these occasions, but it is remarkable how orderly the proceedings are. If you have been at one of the public masked balls in Paris at the Grand

Opera, you will remember how catching is the spirit of that exciting scene. A bishop, it has been said, could hardly remain there an hour without dancing the *cancan*. No temptation of this kind assails you at Florence. Towards morning, it is true, a few fast characters in audacious dresses are to be seen; and sometimes stalwart men bearing saucy *débardeurs* on their shoulders round the vast area, or catching others as they leap from the first tier of boxes. But a masked ball at the Pergola and Pagliano is a very different affair from a public masked ball in the capital of France, where, as a rule, dancing and debauchery appear to be inseparable, and riot culminates to fury, as the mad torrent of masks sweeps round in the Ronde Infernale.

It is not uncommon at the Pergola, for those who have commodious boxes, to give suppers in them on the night of these balls. It was my privilege to be invited to one given by a lady well known in Florence for her hospitality and the elegance of her entertainments. The magic quickness with which the supper was laid out in her box, was startling. We were requested by her *homme d'affaires* to give him and his assistants possession of the box for a short time, and informed that, when we saw it lighted, we might return to it. Accordingly, we

joined the maskers below, and had not been among them more than a few minutes, when we beheld the box blazing with waxlights. On entering it, the scene was of the most fairylike character—a stage transformation could scarcely have been more complete or rapid. The box which, during the evening, had been but dimly lighted, as befitted the occasion when masks and mystery ruled the night, was now illuminated *en plein jour*, and, by an ingenious arrangement of plants and flowers, assumed a bower-like appearance; while down the middle ran a table laid out *à la Russe*.

The ladies of the party of course unmasked, which gave rise to considerable amusement and many surprises; for Italians are very clever at a masquerade, contriving generally to mystify even their closest relatives and most intimate friends. Indeed, a man cannot fail to derive amusement from these masked balls, unless he be a solemn antique gentleman, or melancholy has claimed him for her own; and in these cases he has no business to attend them. Byron, you may remember, tells us that he always found an entertainment of this kind in Italy a specific against dulness. Alluding to the Ridotto at Venice, where masked balls were given before the mirth of the Venetians was

crushed by Austrian rule, and where we shall now see again—

> Sport that wrinkled care derides,
> And laughter holding both his sides,

he says:—

> 'tis a place
> To which I mean to go myself to-morrow,
> Just to divert my thoughts a little space,
> Because I'm rather hippish, and may borrow
> Some spirits; guessing at what kind of face
> May lurk beneath each mask: and as my sorrow
> Slackens its pace sometimes, I'll make, or find,
> Something shall leave it half-an-hour behind.

How light-hearted gaiety reigned supreme at that supper, and how amusing it was to look down on the buffoonery of the revellers beneath us! Among these was a lady, who assumed the part of Corinne; but her attempts to emulate that fair improvisatore were by no means successful. Corinne, you may remember, poured forth her last song of sorrow at Florence, and in that city she died.

While the higher and middle classes patronise the Pergola and Pagliano, the lower crowd the Goldoni Theatre, where masked balls are also given; but as the price of admission is only fivepence, the company is not, as you may suppose, very select. Yet, if you wish to see the people make merry, you

should attend one of these balls. Be careful, however, to keep aloof from all frays, for the men here are apt to quarrel when a girl is doubtful property; and they have an ugly habit, when the blood becomes heated, of using their knives with an alacrity that does not admit of much distinction of persons. At one of these balls last winter, a row, arising from the above cause, took place between a party of Florentines and Piedmontese, who have by no means fraternised. Knives were drawn, three persons killed, and several wounded.

All the fault of those 'Cattivi' Piedmontese, said a venerable Florence marquis to me the following morning, when the news of this fatal brawl spread through the city. 'Our people will become very wicked,' he added. And, as I heard similar observations from other persons, you will be right to infer that there are many Florentines who deprecate the change in their city, that has led to the immigration of what are called barbarous northerners.

CHAPTER VI.

The Churches of Florence—San Maria del Fiore—Decree respecting its Construction—San Giovanni—Religious Services—The Cat in the Duomo—The Dog and the Devil—The Pope and Plenary Indulgence—Former Religious State of Florence—Iron Cross in Pisa—Garibaldi's Advice respecting Priests—The Trinity of Rome—Religious Ceremonies in Santa Croce—Military Services—Santa Maria Novella—Santa Spirito—Army Chaplains in Italy.

'CRIBBED, cabined, and confined,' as are the majority of the Government establishments in Florence, pending the erection of suitable edifices for their accommodation, the churches, notwithstanding the increase of population, continue to present so great a contrast between the vast space and the congregations attending them, as to provoke criticism.

A lover of cathedrals and churches, irrespective of the religion they enshrine, provided that they shine in the beauty of holiness, will spend many hours during his residence in Florence in her churches, and especially in her grand Duomo, which was even more to the Florentine of old than a mere place of worship.

No city, assuredly, has a more glorious cathedral than this. Not as a mere vain outpouring of wealth, were those marbles carved into forms of beauty, and reared aloft to adorn this holy temple. Look at the words of the Florentine republic, when the citizens determined on erecting in their city a cathedral which should surpass all existing ecclesiastical edifices in magnificence:—

Whereas the chief aim of a people of great origin should be to act in a way that, from their works, everyone shall at once recognise their wise and magnanimous manner of proceeding, we hereby order Arnolfo Capo Maestro, of our city, to make a model or design for the complete rebuilding of Santa Reparata, with the greatest possible magnificence that the human mind is capable of conceiving; since it has been decreed in council that nothing should be undertaken for the community that does not correspond entirely to the ideas of its most enlightened citizens, united together to decide on such subjects.

How admirably these injunctions were carried out is well known. For though Santa Maria del Fiore has been surpassed by St. Peter's—for which it furnished the idea—Brunelleschi's mighty dome remains without a rival; and if you read those

marbles aright which, for the great length of five hundred feet, encase the walls of this grand cathedral, they are eloquent sermons in stones, pregnant with meaning.

Within full view of the cathedral, sat Dante Alighieri during many hours of his unquiet life; taking, we may be sure, great delight in contemplating the building of this magnificent temple; for there is a glory in it full of healing to the vexed soul. And how can we measure the influence of the mighty structure on the many generations who have walked beneath its shadow?

Tal sopra sasso, sasso,
Di giro in giro eternamente io strussi,
Che così passo, passo,
Alto girando al Ciel mi ricondussi,

says the inscription on the cathedral; and, remembering the religious reverence manifested in times past, we cannot doubt that this edifice, with Giotto's marvellous tower and the adjoining Baptistry —Dante's 'mio bel San Giovanni'—had a very great effect for good on the Florentines of old.

But is this the case now? Do Florentines of the present day stop in the surrounding piazza to gaze on their glorious fane; and, influenced by the beauty of holiness, pass within its walls, where that dim

religious light, especially soothing to devout minds, almost persuades the soul to worship? Not so. During repeated visits to Santa Maria del Fiore, at all hours of the day, I never saw an Italian pause before it. I may be told, and justly, that the same may be said of our sooty St. Paul's, round which the fervid pulse of life beats madly; rarely, if ever, taking rest. But, although the stern sublimity of our cathedrals may not generally influence those beyond the pale of the drowsy felicity of cathedral duties and emolument, yet any comparison instituted between continental and English cathedrals, as regards the religious reverence and veneration that they create, is greatly in favour of the latter. For, glorious as is the Duomo of Florence, the religion within strikes as being little better than paralysed Christianity. Abounding in vast ecclesiastical machinery, the wheels continue to revolve, but with apparently the same unproductive result as that arising from turning a crank in a model prison. Services are held, but the priests frequently outnumber the congregation. True, this is not the fashionable church of Florence; Santa Annunziata being to that city what the Gesu is to Rome, religion and sweet music blending harmoniously; but still you would naturally expect to see the

cathedral services, at least on Sunday, well attended, whereas the very reverse is the case.

I have frequently been present at services in the Duomo when the congregation did not number a dozen persons; and, on more than one occasion during the week-days, I have seen the priest officiate with no other living creatures near the altar, but the acolyte, a cat,* and myself.

The religious tide in Florence has evidently ebbed strongly since Forsyth visited the city in 1802. He states, in his book on Italy, that Florence was one of the godliest cities in Europe; infinitely superior to Pisa, which was so lukewarm at that period in religious matters, that the Pope sent a multitude of iron crosses to be fixed on the houses, and offered one year and forty days' remission of sins for every kiss that should be given them; yet not a passenger

* This cat—a magnificent male specimen of his race—is, or was last winter, an *habitué* of the Duomo. I rarely visited that cathedral without seeing him. He seemed to take especial pleasure in sitting on a bench opposite any altar at which a priest was officiating, and watched the proceedings with great gravity.

But quadrupeds in the cathedral of Florence seem to have long enjoyed a kind of prescriptive right of sanctuary. Beckford tells us that, when he was in Florence, a dog used to frequent the cathedral. One day during Lent, when a reverend padre was preaching against freethinkers, the dog rushed up and down the vast interior, barking furiously. 'Patience, patience, dear brethren!' cried the padre, 'è il Diavolo!'

could be bribed by this liberal indulgence. And, only a few years ago, when enquiring the way from a woman to the Annunziata in Florence, she exclaimed with solemnity, before giving me the information, '*Santissima* Annunziata, signor!'

You might, indeed, suppose that the Florentines have acted on Garibaldi's advice with respect to their priests. Ascribing, at a meeting in Florence, much of the disorganisation in the Neapolitan provinces to the Bourbons and priests, a man in the crowd called out, 'Death to the priests!' 'No, no, my good fellow, don't wish death to them,' said Garibaldi; 'but, if you want to get rid of them, act as I do: don't go into their *santa bottega*.'

But let me not be misunderstood. Though worshippers are no longer gathered together in crowds, as of old, before the altars at which priests officiate, you will find numerous devotees kneeling meekly before the shrines of the Madonna. Not many years have elapsed, since a painting of the Virgin, which was discovered in 1835 near one of the organs in the Duomo, had, according to a curious print of the figure in my possession, the effect of causing the ravages of the cholera to cease in Pisa; and there are many other Madonnas in Florence that enjoy a high reputation for miraculous powers. A notice on the walls of Santa Croce, headed, 'Indulgenze concesse

da sua Santità Pio IX.,' informs us, under the date of Jan. 19, 1866, that 'Indulgenza plenaria' will be accorded to all on the point of death who invoke the name of Mary.

Renan was not far wrong, when he declared that the true Trinity of Rome consists in the Father, Son, and Virgin; the latter, however, being the most honoured, for she is generally represented in the Madonna Incoronata pictures as being crowned by the Father and Son. But even Virgin-worship seems to be on the decline in Florence; witness the great number of Virgin shrines that have been allowed to fall to ruin at the corners of streets and thus, notwithstanding the increased population in the capital of Italy, her churches are out of all proportion to her religious requirements. Occasionally, it is true, the vast interior of Santa Croce is thronged; but then the church puts forth her greatest attractions. A funeral service to the memory of a deceased prince, or illustrious statesman, is certain to draw an enormous crowd; for while the eye gazes curiously at a wonderful exhibition of the undertaker's art in the form of a gigantic catafalque, resplendent with ornaments and blazing with waxlights, the ear is delighted by the masses of Mozart or Cherubini, performed by an orchestra far superior to that at

the Pagliano or Pergola. However, even on these occasions, reverence is almost entirely absent; and were it not that you cannot destroy the impression that you are in a religious edifice, which has happily withstood the obliterating effect of ages, you would suppose that the scene before you was more associated with a theatre than a church.

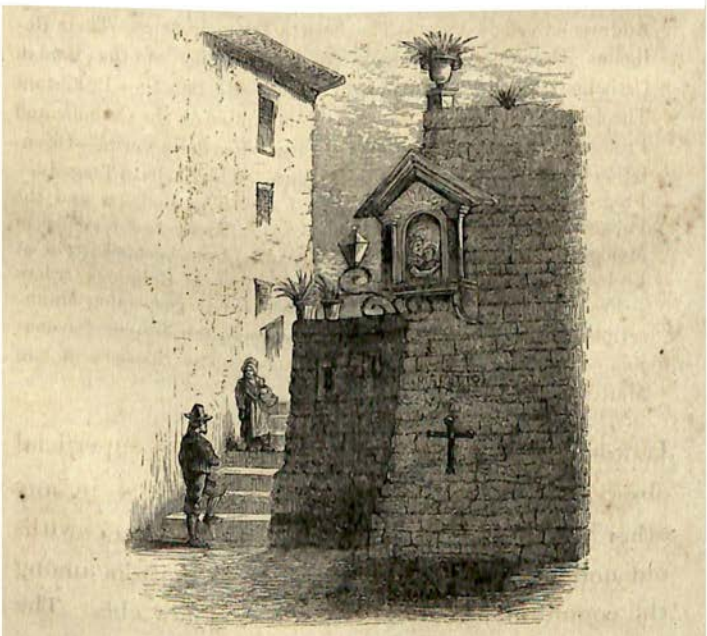
But if you desire to see how utterly meaningless, heartless, and soulless, the Roman Catholic service has become to Italians who, we must assume, rank with educated gentlemen, attend one of the military services, held on each Sunday morning, in the church of Santa Maria Novella, or Santo Spirito.

During the entire service, with the exception of the brief period when the host is elevated, military bands play anything but impressive sacred music, officers cluster in groups immediately before the high altar, conversing and laughing without the slightest reserve; while the priest, attended by a private soldier in uniform, who acts as acolyte, goes through the prescribed ritual with amazing celerity. If the officers set so bad an example, we must not expect the privates to exhibit much devotion. Nor do they. General conversation is, of course, not permitted, but you can see at a glance that the service at which they are required to be present has no religious influence over them.

Formerly, the ecclesiastical relations between the Italian army and the Church were much closer than they are now. Every soldier, officer as well as private, was obliged to attend confession, or to produce a card showing that he had passed through this ordeal once during the year. This regulation has been abolished, and now the Italian soldier may attend the confessional, or not, as he pleases. As a matter of course, the Vatican did not approve this license, and went even so far as to declare that all Victor Emmanuel's soldiers, abstaining from the confessional, perilled the salvation of their souls. To the majority, this intimation carried no weight; but there were some men who, brave, doubtless, in battle, possessed a secret dread of the Papal ban. So although the Pope forbade priests generally from attaching themselves to the King of Italy's army, the Italian Government had no difficulty whatever in obtaining the services of priests to act as army chaplains. Each regiment has a chaplain, distinguished from his brother priests by a gold cord round his wide-awake hat.

These chaplains are, with scarcely an exception, jovial-looking young fellows, who are evidently not inclined to exact severe penance from military sinners disposed to make a clean breast of their offences. More than once, during my walk through

Florence, I have seen these priests, at evening hours, rationally indulging in a weed. At first, the sight seemed somewhat strange, for ecclesiastical etiquette forbids priests smoking; though common sense shows that they have as much right to smoke as laymen. Such, too, is the opinion of many Italian gentlemen who belong to the party of Roman Catholic Church Reformers, now largely influencing, not only Florence, but all Italy. But this movement is of such importance as to deserve a separate chapter.



Shrine—Viadei Bardi.

CHAPTER VII.

State of Religion in Florence—San Antonio and the Farmers—Religious Caricatures—Il Governo Temporale—Three religious Classes in Italy—The Codini—Padre Passaglia—His Life—He furnishes the Pope with Authorities for propounding the Immaculate Conception Dogma—Goes to Turin—Influence of Cavour—Change in Passaglia's Sentiments—Catholic Reform Party—Leaders of the Movement—Their Organs—Giù Il Temporale—Garibaldi's Address—Curious Print—The Societa Emancipatrice—Their Religious Opinions—Coleridge's Guide—Stability of the Roman Catholic Religion—Protestantism in Italy—De Sanctis—Protestant Theological College in Florence—Montesquieu on the Catholic and Protestant Religions—L'Amico di Casa—Eco della Verità—Circulation of the New Testament in Florence—The Barletto Tragedy—Progress of Religious Liberty in Italy—The Bishops and the Papacy—Suppression of Religious Establishments—Number of Monks, &c. in Italy—Revenue derivable from secularisation of Ecclesiastical Property—Pensions to Members of Religious Orders—Preservation of celebrated Monasteries—Law respecting Manuscripts and Art Treasures—Monte Cassino—San Marco—Savonarola—His Cell—Fra Angelica's Frescoes—The Speziera of San Marco.

It would be impossible for even the most superficial observer to be long in Florence, or indeed in any other large town in Italy—excepting Rome—without noticing that interest in religious matters among the community generally is at a very low ebb. The

upper classes hold to Romanism because it was the faith of their fathers, but beyond having their children baptized in San Giovanni, where every Florentine still receives his or her name from the church, and being committed to the earth by the same spiritual mother, her religious observances concern them very little. How little, is abundantly shown by the recent civil marriage law, which has already become extremely popular, despite the spiritual threats hurled against those availing themselves of its facilities to become man and wife. Thus the churches have not only lost their congregations, but the latter, as a body, appear to regard religion itself with the utmost indifference.

An article that I purchased in a shop in Florence, was wrapped in paper covered with such extremely neat and clear writing that I was led to examine the manuscript. It was a portion of the account-book of the steward of a farm near Florence, setting forth, in abstract, the sums he had expended on the farm during ten years, ending in 1849. Among the items was the following: *Elemósina per la benedizione dei bestiami per San. Antonio*, 50 *paoli*. This is at the rate of five pauls, or about 2*s*. 6*d*. a year, presuming that the cattle were blessed annually. Not certainly a large sum; but it is extremely doubtful

whether any landed proprietor near Florence would be willing to incur even a fraction of this expense now for the choicest blessings that the most zealous sacerdotal representative of San Antonio could invoke on his animals. In Rome the faith in this saint's powers is waning rapidly; in Florence it is, I apprehend, at zero.

This, however, is not what we have to deplore, but that scepticism has usurped the place of blind superstition to such a degree that even the most solemn and rational ordinances of the Roman Catholic Church are held up to ridicule. Week after week the newspaper shops in Turin, Milan, Florence, and Naples teem with caricatures of the most abominable description. Pope and cardinals, priests, churches, convents and monasteries, are made subjects of jest. Pius IX. is especially selected for ridicule, and even worse; for in one caricature he is represented decapitated, the executioner being a representation of Cellini's celebrated Perseus in the Loggia Orcagna, who does his bloody work as the genius of Italy. Another portrays him seated on a chair supported by French bayonets. While in all these caricatures, the insignia of the Papacy are grossly and most improperly treated.

Another print, entitled, 'Il Governo Temporale del

Papa,' displays a demon crowned by a tiara, wearing a mask branded Hypocrisy: a sword at his side is inscribed, Envy, Hatred, Malice, and Armed Force, while near him are the keys of St. Peter, labelled, Keys of the Inquisition; a colossal figure of Christ surmounting all, from whose mouth proceeds the words, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'

Winking Madonnas and weeping saints may be fair game, but the license of caricature is greatly exceeded by such publications as these. Looking at them we can come to no other conclusion, than that not only has Romanism fallen very low in public estimation, but also that it has worked great evil in Italy, by turning the hearts of men into stone, if not even worse. And, how false doctrines, debasing observances, and religious superstitions can distort the soul, and finally overthrow faith in God, is well known.

The result of all this is the existence of three classes in Italy: one, and by far the smallest, the class who hold by Romanism with all its dogmas and superstitions, modern as well as ancient—genuine Papalini—represented in the Italian Parliament by the Codini party,* who are led by Cesare Cantu;

* Literally, the party with tails, in allusion to the formo fashion of wearing the hair as a pigtail behind.

another, who formally calling themselves Romanists, are really of no religion at all; and a third, who truly love the faith of their fathers, and desire to see it as it was in the early days of Christianity. This is the Reforming Catholic party, who, unless the signs of the times are entirely false, are destined to make a great change in the religious world, not only in Italy but also throughout the continent.

Until my recent sojourn in Florence, I conceived that Padre Passaglia had been the originator of this reform movement, now however, from various searching enquiries that I made, it appears that the movement arose even before Passaglia became known as a reformer. That the movement owes much to that enthusiastic priest cannot be denied, and his name is so closely associated with Italian religious reform, that some account of him is necessary.

Carlo Passaglia is the son of the late General Passaglia, who lived in a palace at Florence during the winter, and on his estates, which were considerable, in Lucca during the villeggiatura. Carlo, an only son, would naturally have inherited his father's property, but woman, who more or less influences all men, caused him to forsake the gay world of Florence, and become a priest. It happened in this

wise: Carlo, while yet a boy, fell in love with a girl of great beauty, whom he fondly believed loved him in return. But the girl proved, if not untrue, at all events fickle, for she threw off her young lover and espoused a wealthy old nobleman. The blow shattered Carlo's heart; and at the same moment that his idol vowed allegiance at the altar to the rich noble, he formed the resolution of devoting his life to the priesthood.

It is worthy of remark, with reference to Passaglia's future life and his influence on the Papacy, that a somewhat similar circumstance happened to Pius IX. Passaglia, however, had no friendly pope to advise him to become a priest;* the step was taken on his own responsibility, and the result proved that he was sincere in his choice of a profession. For not only did he abandon all worldly amusements in order to devote himself uninterruptedly to religious studies, but he sacrificed the whole of his worldly fortune, amounting to nearly 50,000*l.*, by entering the Society of the Jesuits. In this fraternity he soon became remarkable for his studious habits, and eventually attained

* When young Mastai (Pio Nono) was crossed in love, Pius VII., who took an interest in the love-sick youth, said '*Caro giovane, fatevi chicrico*, and you will be cured.'

such high reputation for his theological learning, that he was selected by Pius IX. to furnish the Church with the necessary authorities for promulgating the Immaculate Conception dogma. The request was responded to by the learned Jesuit. Ponderous manuscript volumes were sent to the Vatican, filled with profound if not sound theology. The Pontiff gave them and their author the warmest welcome, and backed by arguments, pronounced by the Sacred College to be unanswerable, the amazing dogma was propounded.

It is difficult now to believe that Passaglia was truly in earnest when he thus gave the Pope authorities for declaring this dogma; all facts, however, point to this conclusion. After the definition of the dogma, Passaglia lived on terms of the closest intimacy with Pius IX., and when His Holiness was obliged to leave Rome in 1848, Passaglia left the city at the same time.

On the Pope's return, the Jesuit was again at his side, basking in the sunshine of political favour; and so fully did he enjoy the confidence of Pius IX., that he was selected by the latter to proceed on a mediatorial mission to Turin, having for its object the recognition by the Italian Government of the powers of the Vatican. But the appointment was most

disastrous to the Papacy. Passaglia was confronted by Cavour, and the Jesuit priest succumbed beneath the master-mind of the patriot statesman. He left Rome a staunch Ultramontanist. He returned to the Vatican converted to the belief that the temporal power of the Pope was a mistake, and strove as diligently to prove that it was entirely unsupported by authority, as he had done to find evidence in favour of the Immaculate Conception dogma.

The anger of the Pope was great, but even greater was the desire to crush this now hated rebel in the papal camp. Rumours prevailed that his life was in danger, and that subtle poisons would be administered to the renegade. The Jesuits, as a matter of course, expelled him from their society. The Sacred College joined the crusade against him. Orders were issued for his arrest; but before these could be carried out, Passaglia was far from Rome. Aided by friends, he escaped from the Spada Palace, where he was sojourning, during the night, and in a few days arrived at Turin. His reception in that city was most enthusiastic. Thousands gathered round him. The authorities gave him hearty welcome. Thus encouraged he commenced his great work of Church reform; and such was the favour with which the movement was regarded, that in the course of a very brief

period, nearly 10,000 priests flocked to his banner and signed the celebrated document against papal temporal power.

Journals were now published, principally filled by his writings, advocating this change; and he seized every opportunity, by preaching as well as by publishing, to further the great cause that he had at heart. With such a chief, whose hands were still further strengthened by his being elected into the national Parliament, and supported by a very army of priests, it might be fairly supposed that the results of the movement would be of a very decided and remarkable nature. Not so, however. The fruits are almost negative, and the colossal reform scheme, for such it certainly was, has collapsed in a manner most difficult of explanation. Even of Passaglia himself, of whom I expected to hear much in Florence, nothing could be gleaned beyond the information that he was believed to be living inactively at Turin.

The failure of this movement is probably due to the proposed reform having been too much confined to the Papacy. The people yearned for a more sweeping change, and their support fell off when they found that their wishes were not likely to be satisfied. It has also been stated, that Passaglia, though the acknowledged chief of his party, was not

adapted to be their leader. Strong and subtle in argument when in the closet among ponderous tomes of theology, he is not gifted with the talents necessary to lead a great party; and even in the House of Deputies, where he was expected to shine, he is said to have signally failed.

But, although thus disappointed in their chief, vast numbers of priests, who flocked to Passaglia's standard, have by no means retired from the field of battle. Other, and apparently better men, have come forward, and under their leadership, the great work of Roman Catholic reform is making head in Italy; and it is only doing these gentlemen justice to state, that even before Passaglia struck the blow that shook the Vatican, they were working silently, but surely; not to Protestantise Italy, for this would be labour lost, but to reform the Roman Catholic religion, and by stripping it of its deforming crust of superstitions and unwarrantable dogmas, restore it to its original pure condition.

Among the most zealous and notable leaders of this most praiseworthy movement are Mongini, Count Tasca, Tiboni, Canon of Brescia, Senatore Pintor, judge of the High Court of Justice at Milan, Baron Ricasoli of Florence, Canon Reali of Rome, and Ambrogio, who preaches to vast congregations in

the north of Italy in the open air, advocating extensive reforms in the Roman Catholic Church.

The party is represented by two journals; the *Emancipatore Cattolico,* published at Naples, and the *Esaminatore,* published in Florence; and to a considerable extent by a very quaint journal entitled *Giù Il Temporale,* also published in the new capital. The very title of this paper is made to do double duty to the cause advocated, the words *Il Temporale* being printed in large broken type, which appears tumbling in all directions, as if the letters had been first smashed and then set up by a drunken compositor. These erratic characters are surmounted by a stalwart *Giù,* so printed as to appear to be literally striking down *Il Temporale*; and above all, in very conspicuous type, is the following address from Garibaldi to the conductors of the journal:—

CARI FRATELLI.

Ogni lavoro tendente a sanar la nostra Italia e il mondo dalla *Crittogama* sacerdotale, ha ed avrà sempre la mia piena adesione. Ecco per me la questione di schiavitù o di libertà, di grandezza o di abbassamento, di vita o di morte. Auguro quindi al vostro periodico il *Temporale* prospera sorte.

Caprera, 8 Agosto 1865.

Vostro sempre. G. GARIBALDI.

It would be well if all publications having for their

object the reform of the Roman Catholic Church, and especially the abuses of the Vatican, were as harmless as this quaint publication. Many, however, and especially those of a pictorial nature, are, as we have seen, sadly intolerant.

In happy contrast to the latter, is one prominently displayed in the windows of the principal Protestant booksellers in Florence. It is a large coloured engraving representing the interior of a Roman Catholic church during high mass, and is entitled *La Chiesa Romana Giudicata dálla Parola di Dio.*

Religious objects appertaining to the worship of the Church have inscriptions attached to them derived from the Bible. Thus to statues of the Madonna and saints are the words taken from Exodus xx. 4, 5; to angels, the words from Colossians ii. 18; to notices regarding prayers, penances, and absolutions, Acts viii. 17-20; to representations of the Father, John iv. 24; and so on with many of the objects throughout the building. The cost of this picture, which is large and extremely well executed, is very small.

But the reform movement derives perhaps the greatest assistance from an association entitled the 'Società Emancipatrice, e di Mutuo Soccorso del

Sacerdozio Italiano. The President of this influential body is Luigi Prota, and the association, whose head-quarters are at Naples, has thirty-one branch societies in Italy, and nearly 5,000 members, including about 1,500 priests.

By means of the publications of this society, which may be regarded as fairly representing the Roman Catholic reform party in Italy, we are enabled to see pretty clearly what is desired. The leading features are, deprivation of the Pope's temporal power; substitution of the original title Bishop of Rome for that of Pope; all breviaries and liturgies in the Latin language to be disused, and no books of this nature to be allowed unless printed in Italian; unfettered circulation of the Bible; voluntary confession; abolition of celibacy among the priesthood.

These, it will be admitted, are sweeping reforms, which, if carried out, will change and purify the Roman Catholic religion to a very great extent. It is, indeed, difficult to overestimate the importance of this religious reform movement. The free circulation of the Scriptures, if carried into effect, will alone suffice to break down the strongholds of superstition, while marriage among the clergy generally would be immediately followed by beneficial results. So important, indeed, is this considered, that hundreds of

articles have been published in the organs of the reform party to prove that there is no Scriptural authority against priests' contracting marriage. Indeed, among the five chief spiritual plagues of Italy, as set forth by these Church reformers, viz. papal sovereignty, monkish superstitions, retrograde high clergy, monks and nuns, and celibacy of the priests, the latter is put down as the blackest and most pestilential. 'I do not believe,' says one writer, 'that there ever existed a priest, even among the most pure and holy, who did not, at some time of his life, experience such feelings as caused him to curse the ecclesiastical law imposing celibacy on priests.' Another cites the Scriptures in support of marriage, and points to St. Peter, founder of the Roman Catholic religion, who was married, showing that bishops had wives as late as the end of the fourth century, and that it was only under the pontificate of the seventh Gregory that celibacy began to be exacted from priests.

Divested of its superstitions, and restored to its original primitive Christian purity, the difference between the Protestant and Roman Catholic religions would not be very great; but fusion of the creeds will never take place. Many of the lower orders of Catholics are utterly unacquainted with the nature

of Protestantism, regarding the professors of this religion as rank heretics. Coleridge tells us that when he was travelling in Italy, his guide, astonished by seeing Coleridge prostrate himself when the host was carried through a street in which they were walking, asked him, with great seriousness of manner, whether he was a Catholic. 'I hope so,' replied Coleridge. 'And are all English, Catholics too?' demanded the guide. 'I hope and trust they are,' responded Coleridge. 'What! you believe in Christ?' 'Certainly! and,' added Coleridge, 'in the Holy Ghost also.' 'What, then,' said the guide, after a long pause, 'can be the difference between you and us? Oh those terrible priests! what liars they must be! for they say you are to be certainly damned. But, signor, you know, we cannot do without them.' Some of the peasantry probably now think otherwise, especially those in Tuscany, where many are of opinion that the keys will go down before the cross. But although an Italian may despise, he cannot entirely spare his priest. Without him he often manages to live, but seldom dares to die.

Any account of religious reformation in Italy, and especially in Florence, would be incomplete without some mention of the endeavour that has been made

to found a Protestant Church in that peninsula. This, however, is by no means easy. Indigenous Protestantism can hardly be said to exist south of the Alps. Italians that you meet in general society, and can induce to talk on religion—almost always difficult, on account of the supreme indifference felt for it—will frequently avow their dislike and even abhorrence of the superstitions, malversations, and perversions of the Roman Catholic Church; but if you venture to introduce Protestantism, they recoil from the subject with evident aversion. Reformed Catholics they may become, but Protestants, in the Anglican sense, never. To change your religion would be bad taste, and involve losing caste: thus 'I Protestanti' are spoken of with sneering derision, and yet the existence of this new sect in Italy, and particularly in Florence, cannot be overlooked. There are two chapels occupied by them in that city, where they are under the spiritual guidance of De Sanctis, one of the most zealous Protestant evangelicals in Europe. There is also an excellent college of theology, presided over by this reformer, where about thirty youths were undergoing religious training last winter.

Unfettered in any way by the Italian Government, and considerably assisted by the Waldenses, Pro-

testantism is afforded every possible opportunity of gaining converts in all parts of Italy under Victor Emmanuel's sway. But with these facts, and others of a similar nature might be adduced, it cannot be considered that Protestantism is gaining much ground even in Florence. With wise prevision Montesquieu remarks, in his chapter on the Roman Catholic and Protestant religions:—

'Quand la religion chrétienne souffrit, il y a deux siècles, ce malheureux partage qui la divisa en Catholique et en Protestante, les peuples du Nord embrassèrent la protestante, et ceux du Midi gardèrent la catholique.

'C'est que les peuples du Nord ont, et auront toujours, un esprit d'indépendance et de liberté que n'ont pas les peuples du Midi; et qu'une religion qui n'a point de chef visible convient mieux à l'indépendance du climat que celle qui en a un.'*

It is due to De Sanctis to state that his publications enjoy enormous circulation. His famous almanack, entitled 'L'Amico di Casa,' ingeniously contrived to carry a vast amount of useful information, and at the same time batteries of artillery directed against Romanism and its errors, is met with all over Italy, not excepting Rome, where I have

* De l'Esprit des Lois. Chap. v.

frequently seen it in the houses of the middle classes and artisans.

Nor are the Florentines without a journal reflecting their opinions and aspirations. This is the 'Eco della Verità,' published, in a great measure, under Waldensian influence. It has a weekly circulation of about 1,250 copies, and contains well-written articles in favour of Protestantism. But the great impetus given to religious reform is the spread of the Scriptures, and especially of the New Testament. The circulation of the latter in Italy is now enormous. For one franc, a most elegant small quarto edition of the New Testament in Italian, admirably translated, and printed in clear type, is sold in Florence; and I have the authority of the proprietors of the shops where Protestant publications are kept, for stating that the sale of this book in Florence and throughout Tuscany is immense.

But although Government interposes no difficulties to the spread of Protestantism, there is no doubt that the hindrances besetting its onward path are very great. Look at the frightful tragedy perpetrated in Barletto, when the priest of that town encouraged a bigoted mob to murder the Protestant clergyman Gaetano Giannini. In a letter addressed by the latter to a friend, and published in the 'Eco

della Verità,' he gives such an account of the affair, that, making every allowance for partiality, we seem to be reading of events that took place in barbarous countries inhabited by heathens.

But, notwithstanding this terrible occurrence, there is no doubt that the powers of the Vatican are being sapped, and that the waves of religious liberty are rolling up to the very walls of Rome.

Over the dumb Campagna Sea,
Out in the offing through mist and rain,
Saint Peter's church heaves silently,
Like a mighty ship in pain.

Protestantism may not be on the increase in Italy, but there is a spirit of Protestantism abroad in that fair land which is assuredly spreading rapidly. That sybarite pontiff Julius III., who loved quiet and luxury above all things, is said to have inscribed over his palace, '*Let all honest men enjoy themselves decently without scruple.*' What that meant is well known; and it is because the Papacy turned aside from the paths of virtue, self-abnegation, and purity of religion, that it is now so much despised. What says Dante?—

. . . . la chiesa di Roma
Per confondere in se duo reggimenti,
Cade nel fango, e se brutta e la soma.*

* Purg. Cant. xvi.

The majority of Italians would probably willingly endorse the lines:—

> For priestly men who covet sway,
> And wealth—though they declare not,
> Who point, like finger-posts, the way
> They never go—we care not.

And be it observed, Rome, by a spirit of sustained obstinacy, at issue with all common sense, has done all in her power to further dissension among her followers. Many examples might be adduced illustrative of the suicidal policy of the Vatican; let this, however, suffice for the present. When the Italian Government recast her ecclesiastical laws on the enlargement of the kingdom, it was resolved that all bishops appointed by the Pope should take the following oath:—I, ——, by the grace of God and of the Holy Father Pontiff, appointed Bishop of ——, swear to be faithful to His Majesty Victor Emmanuel, and to his royal successors, and to loyally observe the statutes and laws of this realm, enacted for the well-being of His Majesty and the good of the country.'

To this oath, simple as it is, the Sacred College not only objected, but gave all churchmen fair warning that those rash enough to take it would forthwith be consigned to that spiritually dark place dreaded by all good Romanists.

Consequently many sees in Victor Emmanuel's dominions have been vacant; a matter, however, of supreme indifference to this soldier-king, who troubles himself as little as he can possibly help with Church matters.

But the ecclesiastical requirements of Italy could not be overlooked by Government, and measures have been taken to deal with these bishoprics, the affairs of which have been in the meanwhile administered as far as possible by priests. Few State questions in Italy, after the all-important and vital one of finance, have been of more absorbing interest to Italians, than the secularisation of the Church property. Popular too, according to my experience; for almost all Florentines with whom I conversed on the subject regarded the Government scheme of transferring the ecclesiastical property to the State with great favour.

According to carefully-prepared estimates, this is expected to yield 67,444,656 francs.* The Government propose converting this sum into a five per cent. *rente*, from which life-annuities will be granted to members of religious orders according to the

* Official returns state that there were at the time when this law was passed, 2,382 ecclesiastical establishments in the kingdom of Italy, and 82 religious orders. The former contained 15,500 monks, 18,198 nuns, 4,474 lay friars, and 7,671 lay sisters, forming a total of 45,843.

following scale. To friars and nuns of non-mendicant orders above sixty years of age, 600 francs; to those between forty and sixty, 480 francs; and to those below forty, 360 francs. To friars and nuns of mendicant orders, 250 francs, without distinction of age. To lay sisters of the mendicant orders, 240 francs, indiscriminately. To those of the non-mendicant orders above sixty years of age, 144 francs, and to those below sixty, 96 francs. In consideration of the above pensions, all religious establishments have been suppressed. The bishoprics, which amounted to 235, with revenues varying from 200 francs to 100,000 francs, are reduced to 69, with emoluments ranging from 12,000 francs to 24,000 francs.* This reduced number of sixty-nine exceeds the number of the provinces by ten; but Government explains this difference by stating, that there are historical localities of very great interest in Italy which it

* Before the suppression of the above 166 bishoprics in Italy, the proportion of inhabitants to each bishopric in various continental countries was as follows:—

Belgium	one to	590,000	inhabitants.
Austria	„	490,000	„
France	„	450,000	„
Bavaria	„	397,000	„
Spain	„	300,000	„
Portugal	„	266,000	„
Italy	„	90,000	„

would be highly undesirable to deprive of their long-existing bishoprics. Ecclesiastics holding bishoprics, canonries, or abbotcies that are suppressed, are to receive life-annuities equal to their present incomes, and finally all priests are to receive a minimum annual salary of 800 francs.

The recent annexation of Venetia will of course cause the above number of bishoprics to be proportionately increased.

It is highly satisfactory to find that the Italian Government, probably influenced in some measure by the remonstrances and requests of other governments and public bodies, have resolved on preserving certain religious houses, which certainly belong as much to the history of Italy as the bishoprics alluded to. It has been well said that the traditions of the past are the ballast of the State-vessel, and the hopes of the future her sails. There are ecclesiastical establishments in Italy which rank among the most precious landmarks in that country, and are to that peninsula what our ancient colleges are to England; abounding, moreover, in glorious memories associated with thrilling deeds, which all patriotic Italians must cherish. The law for secularising the religious institutions contains a clause to the effect that all manuscripts, scientific documents, and artistic and antiquarian

objects found in them, not actually appertaining to the churches or chapels of the religious houses, shall be transferred to the libraries and museums in the provinces where the monasteries, &c.. are situated. And there is another clause, setting forth that the Government will make provision for the preservation, with their premises, libraries, archives, and objects of art, of the edifices of Monte Cassino, La Cavas, or La Trinita, between Naples and Salerno, San Martino della Scala near Palermo, of Monreale and the Certosa near Pavia, and also of other similar ecclesiastical establishments distinguished for their monumental importance, or for their artistic or literary treasures.

The suppressed establishments are to be appropriated to public schools, hospitals, poor-houses, and other beneficial purposes.

The destruction or degradation of Monte Cassino would be, indeed, a monstrous act of Vandalism. The history of this religious house, is that of a considerable portion of Italy, for it shared largely in the stirring events of the middle ages. It was founded in 529 by St. Benedict, on the site of a Temple of Apollo—a fact commemorated by Dante in the 'Paradiso;' and long before its annexation to the kingdom of Italy, it was the refuge of men holding advanced

liberal principles. All through the dark Bourbon dynasty, the abbot of Monte Cassino not only held, but advocated, political freedom, and was of great service to the community at large, by invariably denouncing brigands whenever he became aware of their lurking-places. Nor should it be forgotten that Tosti, the head of this establishment, is a man of deep and extensive learning. Under his supervision a remarkably fine fac-simile of the splendid copy of Dante preserved in their library, was printed by the monks last year in the monastery, and presented to Florence as their tribute to the great Dante Festival. Though frequently pillaged, the vast and numerous halls of the monastery still contain many literary treasures; and it is worthy of record, that, throughout all vicissitudes, the Benedictines of Monte Cassino have been singularly faithful to the rules of their order, and at the same time genial, courteous, and hospitable, as many travellers can attest who have had the pleasure of visiting them. Such a monastery as this should be respected; and gratefully remembering pleasant and profitable hours spent within its walls, I rejoice exceedingly that it will be preserved. In the same spirit, that portion of the Convent of San Marco in Florence occupied by the monks will be allowed to remain in its present condition. This convent was

the home of that soul-stirring monk, who not only endeavoured to preserve the liberty of the Florentines when oppressed by the Medici, but loudly urged the reform of the Church when the papal chair was occupied by Alexander VI. Here Girolamo Savonarola lived, and from his modest cell, which exists unaltered, he was dragged to the torture-chamber and to martyrdom. 'I separate thee from the Church militant,' said the priest, when the agony of torture had wrung a confession from Savonarola, which he retracted, however, when released from the rack. 'But thou canst not separate me from the Church triumphant,' was the monk's reply. More than once, when alone in that cell, with its adjoining sleeping-chamber and chapel, have I thought that few localities in Florence possess greater interest than this narrow space. In San Marco, too, Fra Angelico has left many of his greatest works. The cells and galleries of the monastery are radiant with 'the beauty of holiness,' expressed in the frescoes of this most intense lover of all spiritual beauty, who, while yet mortal, looked with larger eyes than most men on things divine.

The clause respecting art treasures in monasteries, and their removal to museums, could not have been carried into effect in the case of San Marco; for the

frescoes could not be removed. To these frescoes is the preservation of this convent indebted. Let us hope that they may long be allowed to remain in charge of the monks, who are by no means drones in the hive of Florence. For they have a Spezieria, which nearly rivals that of Santa Maria Novella in excellence, where you may obtain unadulterated drugs and dainty perfumes. One change, however, we trust will be made. This is, that ladies may be permitted to see the frescoes. Hitherto they have been strictly excluded from the convent, the Pope only having had the power to give women admission.

Cell of Savonarola, San Marco.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Military Establishments in Florence—The Cavalry Barracks—Their dirty Condition—Troop Horses—The Soldiers' Quarters—Guns and Pistols—Desire to fight the Tedeschi—The Infantry Barracks—The Infirmary—Prison—Fortezza da Basso—Physical Appearance of the Men—The Bersaglieri—Lord Clyde's Opinion of them—Rations—Court Martial on a Lieutenant—Piedmontese Officers—Their great preponderance in the Italian Army—Growth of the Italian Army—Force at the beginning of 1866—Organisation—Manner in which it is recruited—Love of the Army for Victor Emmanuel—His Address to his Soldiers after the taking of Palestro—Elected Corporal of a Zouave Regiment—His reported curious mistake respecting the Champion of England—Willingness of the Italians to fight for their Country—Isabella of Arragon and the Wounded Colonel—Italian Heroes and fair Florentines.

PROVIDED with an order from the Minister of War, authorising me to inspect the military establishments throughout the kingdom of Italy, I visited the barracks in Florence. At all times these soldiers' homes are interesting, but at the period of my visit, when the war enthusiasm was fast gathering to action, they possessed more than usual interest.

I was accompanied by a military secretary from the War Office. This officer was extremely anxious to impress on me that, as Florence had not yet been adapted for receiving a large number of troops, allowance should be made for the defective state of the military establishments. Though willing to accept the excuse, I could not admit the reason given as at all sufficient for the extremely dirty state of the barracks. The cavalry barracks were little better than an augean stable. How officers, who might be seen nightly in the gilded saloons of palaces in gay uniforms, can endure the excessive filth and overpowering ammoniacal odour of the stables under their charge is astonishing. Such, however, was the case. It is true that, in every instance, the cavalry officers on duty in the barracks were smoking potent 'cavours;' but, although this might blunt their sense of smell, it could not render them ocularly insensible to the dirt around them. The horses did not, however, appear to suffer from this state of things, being, as a rule, in good condition. The average price given for troop horses is 30*l.* They would not, it is true, have satisfied a rigid English cavalry officer, but the contrast between them and the stables and yards, in the matter of cleanliness, was extremely gratifying.

With the rooms of the men there was less fault to be found, though their state would not, in all probability, have passed muster in England. The space between the beds was four feet and nine inches, and the beds themselves appeared clean and comfortable. The arms of the men occupying each dormitory, were piled at one end. They were heavy, coarse in manufacture, and ill-calculated to blow the souls out of men's bodies with the rapidity of the famous Prussian needle-gun. The guns were made at Liège, and the pistols at Brescia. While examining these weapons, several soldiers gathered round us; and although the presence of the military secretary had doubtless the effect of imposing silence to a considerable extent, the men were unanimous in their desire to use the arms which we were examining. To fight the Tedeschi seemed to be the wish of the majority, though many appeared indifferent whether they were led to Venetia or to the gates of Rome. Such, however, is the soldier. As a rule, he troubles himself but little where he may be sent, provided there is fighting to be done, with the desirable adjuncts of a good commissariat and billet.

Of the infantry barracks, which are much larger than the cavalry, no better report can be made on the score of cleanliness. The infirmary attached to

the former was in a most unsatisfactory condition, dirtier and more offensive than the prison. In the latter, we found two soldiers undergoing confinement. There is no flogging in the Italian army, punishment being principally limited to imprisonment, and bread and water diet.

At the back of these barracks, which are within the Fortezza da Basso, we found soldiers labouring on earth-works, precisely where the Florence Land and Public Works Company proposed laying out a charming public garden. But although this fortress, with the more imposing citadel of the Belvedere, are utterly useless for any purposes of defence in modern warfare, the Italian Government will not yet consent to their being demolished.

Though the condition of the military quarters of Florence is not creditable to Government, the physical appearance of the men is good. They have not the quick aggressive strut of the French soldier, who seems ever ready to march to the cannon's mouth, shouting defiance to the last, but they have, what is perhaps of more importance, an air of determination and energy that is highly remarkable. This is especially apparent among the Bersaglieri, one of the finest corps in the Italian army. It was of these men that Lord Clyde, who saw them landing at

Balaclava, on the occasion of the Crimean war, is reported to have said, 'I wish to hide my face: I blush for ourselves, when I see the perfect way in which these glorious troops are brought up to their work.'

The rations of each soldier are twenty ounces of bread, or macaroni, and nine of meat, daily, and a quarter of a litre of wine weekly. Besides these allowances, each soldier receives fifteen cents a day. The total annual cost of each soldier to the State is officially estimated at 40*l.*

As we were leaving the infantry barracks, we perceived a crowd of soldiers gathered round a small edifice, near the entrance gates. Entering the building, we found a court-martial sitting on a lieutenant, for a slight breach of discipline towards his superior officer. The latter was a Piedmontese, the prisoner a Tuscan—facts which, in all probability, had considerable influence in the quarrel between the two officers, out of which sprang the alleged breach of discipline.

No less than seventy-five per cent. of the officers of the Italian army are Piedmontese gentlemen. However necessary this may be for the wellbeing of the Italian army generally, it is far from satisfactory to the Neapolitan and Tuscan subjects of Victor Emmanuel. But no charge of partiality can attach

to Government for this great preponderance of Piedmontese; for when the army was increased, it was absolutely necessary to draw the new officers required from the established Sardinian corps, who alone possessed the ripe experience essential to military training and discipline.

The court was composed of two general officers, two colonels, and two majors. The proceedings, conducted apparently with great equity, were public, the hall of trial being filled with soldiers, and a score of civilians.

There are few features, connected with the kingdom of Italy, more remarkable than the growth of the army; amounting, immediately before 1859, to only 49,000 men, it consisted, in 1865, of 400,000. The cost of this force that year was 7,720,000 francs, while the sum expended on public works in the same year, only amounted to 6,640,000 francs. But, with the reserves called out, the Italian army was estimated to amount, at the commencement of the late war, to 430,000 men. Many Italians affirmed that their army consisted of half a million men; but it is always desirable to make a considerable allowance for the difference between paper and parade. The official returns, at the beginning of 1866, stated that the actual fighting force consisted

of 12,940 officers, and 345,175 non-commissioned officers and privates. According to the proportion of troops during peace, to the population of the principal European states, Italy, including Venetia, should have an army of 250,000 men, which, according to the present military organisation, would be thus distributed:—infantry, 154,000; bersaglieri, 17,000; cavalry, 18,000; artillery, 17,500; engineer corps, 4,200; train corps, 3,100; staff and miscellaneous, 36,200.

The report of a Government Commission, appointed to enquire into the state of the Italian army in 1863, contains an account of its organisation. It is composed of twenty-one divisions. Each regiment is divided into battalions, and each battalion into companies. There are seventeen companies in each regiment, each company numbers ninety men, on the peace establishment, and double this number on the war footing. Thus, including officers, the force of each regiment, in time of peace, is 1,691 men, and on the war establishment, 3,269.

The army is recruited by an annual conscription, which has hitherto supplied about 50,000 men. Every man is obliged to serve eleven years, five of which must be spent in active service, the remainder in *congédo illimitato* or on furlough, with the under-

standing that they will be called on to serve in case of war. Besides this conscription, there is a reserve force. Those drawn for this are only required to devote two months to drill and military discipline, but are liable at any time during the ensuing five years to be called out should the country require their services.

I heard no complaints of this system; for though the Italian has a very great dislike to contribute financially to the national exchequer, he is not disinclined to fight for his country, especially when the object is to unite the entire peninsula under his beloved Victor Emmanuel. Many monarchs have been loved by their troops, but probably no sovereign has more completely gained the affection of the army, than this strong-sinewed soldier-king; and no wonder. His martial bearing, his bold and firm aspect, give evidence of the noble race of warriors from which he springs. From the day when he penned that remarkable letter to his army, after the taking of Palestro, commencing with the stirring words, 'Soldiers! our first battle has been our first victory,' he has been idolised by the army. Never sparing of himself—he has carried a knapsack across the Alps—his heroism in battle has been most conspicuous. On one occasion, in the wars which

drove the Austrians out of Lombardy, he manifested such extraordinary gallantry, leading the attacking columns, and throwing himself into the very thick of the action, that the 3rd regiment of Zouaves elected him, by acclamation, their corporal—an honour similar to that bestowed on Buonaparte. One of the soldiers with whom we conversed, declared that he had not unfrequently seen Victor Emmanuel in the thick of the fray; and as a proof of the bellicose tendencies of this monarch, the following amusing royal misapprehension may be cited. Among the English residents in Florence, during several recent winters, has been a reverend gentleman, who, by failure of male issue, has succeeded to the championship of England. It so happens, that this worthy gentleman is of very moderate stature, and would by no means make a good physical representative of a royal champion riding into Westminster Hall, armed *cap-a-pie*, and challenging all who would deny his sovereign's title to the crown. Being informed that the gentleman in question was champion of England, the King is said to have exclaimed, 'Dio mio, e possibile! How could so little a man have beaten the big boxer Heenan? Tell me all about it.'

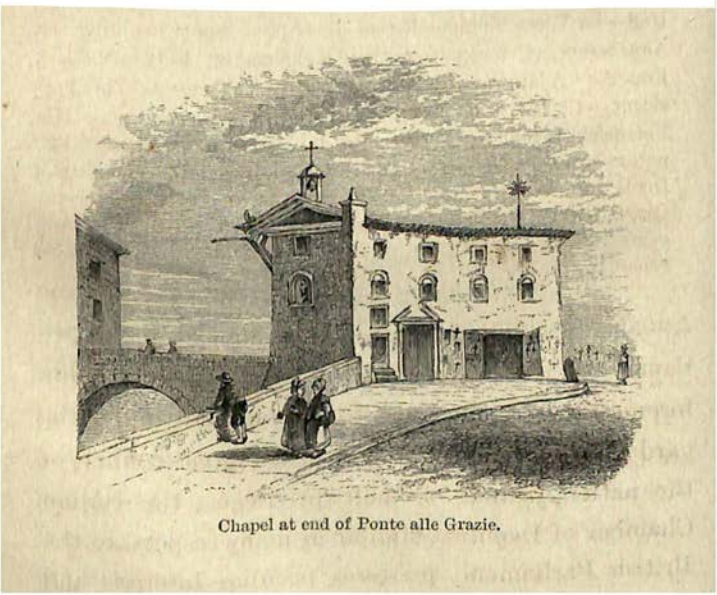
That this story may be an invention is quite possible,

but of Victor Emmanuel's love for war there is no doubt. Of no living monarch can it be said with greater propriety, as far as inclination is concerned, —

La guerre est ma patrie,
Mon harnois ma maison,
Et, en toute saison
Combattre c'est ma vie.

The modern Italian certainly resembles his ancestor in the sixteenth century in his willingness to fight for his country; though the latter frequently, it must be admitted, took up arms more for a pecuniary consideration, than for the holy cause of defending his father-land. Fighting, then, was indeed so common that even the most waspish and bellicose terrier would have been satisfied. The spirit that led neighbouring provinces and towns to rise up against each other, is not entirely extinct, but, happily, it is now directed to higher and more legitimate enterprises. The recent war opportunities, few as they have been, are amply sufficient to prove that modern Italians will fight; and there is no doubt that it would have been much more congenial to them to have annexed Venetia by the valour of their army, than by the aid of an ally. The intense desire that prevailed amongst all classes of men in Tuscany to assist in this work was extraordinary. 'I should like

to be a man,' said Isabella of Arragon, Duchess of Milan, to a Colonna who was terribly hacked in battle, 'were it only to receive such wounds as yours, that I might see if they would become me as they do you.' Fair Italians who will grace the parties at Florence this winter, though perhaps they may not be disposed to be quite as complimentary as this Duchess, will, we may be sure, smile sweetly on those officers who have been wounded in any engagement when the enemy was the much-detested Austrian.



Chapel at end of Ponte alle Grazie.

CHAPTER IX.

The Italian Parliament—Its similarity to the British House of Commons—A Popular Demonstration—Idiosyncrasies of Irish and Italians—A Stump Orator—Venice and Rome—An unpleasant Squeeze—The Palazzo Vecchio—Florence and Government Spies—Wise Policy of the present Government—The Cinque Cento Hall—La Vacca Muglia—Recent Inscription commemorating the Annexation of Tuscany to the Kingdom of Italy—Vasari's Frescoes—Adaptation of the Hall for the Parliament—The President—Classification of the Deputies—Signor Scialoja—His Financial Speech—Its effect on the Public—Government Reporters—Women Reporters—Love for Speaking—Refreshments—Duels between the Deputies—Meeting of the Senate—Ancient Court Theatre—Lengthy Dramatic Performances—Michael Angelo's 'Fiera'—Description of the Senate Hall—Oratory of the Senators.

AMONG the sights of new Florence, the national Parliament, assembled in their grand hall, properly holds foremost rank. To Englishmen especially, who regard their House of Commons as the great council of the nation, jealous of their privileges, the Italian Chamber of Deputies, similar in many respects to the British Parliament, possesses peculiar interest, and no Englishman should omit attending a meeting of

the Chamber, if it be sitting during his residence in Florence.

Desirous of hearing Signor Scialoja, I deferred visiting the house until this minister brought forward his budget, when, favoured with a card of admission to the visitors' gallery, I went to the Via della Ninna, adjoining the Palazzo Vecchio. Here, although it was only a little after 12 o'clock, and the Parliament would not sit until half-past one, I found a great crowd gathered round a door leading to the Hall of Assembly. Concluding that my way lay through this door, I took my stand with those in waiting. Had I used my eyes better I should probably have seen that this was the public entrance, for a notice over the door gave this information; but being too distant from it to be able to read it without considerable difficulty, I remained stationary, or rather became a part of the crowd that surged to and fro until the numbers were so great as to form a living block in the narrow street.

Give Italians liberty of speech, and, opportunity offering, you may be sure that they will not be slow in making their political sentiments known. Possessing many idiosyncrasies in common with the Irish, in no mental peculiarities do the latter and Italians

resemble each other more than in their impatience on all public occasions to impart their political ideas and aspirations to their neighbours. If you have ever visited the Theatre Royal in Dublin, you will remember how, between the acts, the gods turn the gallery into a political arena, giving vent to their excitement in sentiments, which, if not clothed in elegant words, are often highly graphic, and spiced with a dash of humour seldom found among a gathering of English artisans and labourers. For, as the Edgeworths observe in their famous 'Essay on Irish Bulls,' several copies of which, by the way, were ordered by an English agricultural society, the Irish, from the highest to the lowest, in daily conversation about the ordinary affairs of life, employ a superfluity of wit, metaphor, and ingenuity which would be astonishing and unintelligible to a majority of the respectable body of English operatives.

The Italians among whom I found myself, were principally of the latter class; and, judging by the energy of their language and gesticulations, fierce politicians. Especially galling to their feelings was the occupation of Venetia by the Austrians. One man, who seemed to be a superior operative, and who would have made a famous stump orator, held forth

long and loud on that sore point. Being within reach of the door, he scrawled upon it—

Liberiamo Venezia,
E scacciamo lo stranier.

The last word had no sooner been pencilled when another man supplemented 'Roma' to 'Venezia,' declaring at the same time that he would infinitely rather aid in turning Pio Nono out of the Vatican than in emptying the piazza of San Marco of the white-coated soldiers. Then commenced a very storm of words, accompanied, as far as practicable, with much gesticulation; for your Italian is never happy unless he can accompany speech with much muscular action. Occasionally a diversion was endeavoured to be made by others in favour of the great topic of the day—the Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget and the financial difficulty—but this

want of public pence
That vexes public men,

was evidently a very dry subject to the majority, who seemed entirely indifferent to the monetary difficulties besetting the Government. And so time wore on; the doors not being open until half-past one, when the welcome sound of drawing bolts was heard.

Then ensued the rush and pressure usual on such

occasions; and just as I had extracted my ticket from my pocket, in order to have it in hand for presentation, I discovered that I was at the wrong entrance. Too late, however; for now a mighty force, against which any resistance on my part would have been futile, impelled me forwards, almost sending me against a serried rank of soldiers with fixed bayonets. These men, about forty in number, occupied the entrance hall, and endeavoured, by every means in their power, short of using their bayonets, to keep us back; their purpose being to allow only one or two persons at a time to filter through their ranks. But we speedily overpowered them, and with a devil take the hindmost kind of charge, broke their ranks, and rushed up the stairs before us. One, two, three, six, eight, and I know not how many more flights, before the gallery was gained; but this I remember, that when I came to rest on a front seat, I was fairly out of breath, the compression that my ribs had undergone before the doors were opened, not assisting in tranquillising body or mind.

As I afterwards ascertained, had I gone to the entrance through which my ticket gave me passage, I should have avoided all this; but, on the other hand, I should not have heard political harangues from the

mouths of the people. So, altogether, the mistake was in my favour, for I was glad to have gained some knowledge of the popular sentiments, even at the cost of aching sides; and the demonstration was the more interesting considered in connection with the locality where we were assembled. Here, under the shadow of the Palazzo Vecchio, at once the cradle and the tomb of Tuscan liberty, sentiments found expression in words, the utterance of which would, a few years since, have assuredly condemned the speakers to incarceration, and perhaps to even a more severe punishment.

Beckford tells us, that when he was in Florence, the Government did not feel secure without retaining a large staff of spies. He says: In the city of Florence there is neither house nor coffee-house that has not one or more spies belonging to it. Every class furnishes them; gentlemen and ladies receive without shame the wages of iniquity. The very convents are not without their share of this infamy. The streets swarm with those of inferior note—they are posted at every corner; even the cripple who asks your charity is hired to betray your secrets. We read that the Persian monarch had a set of ministers who were called the eyes of the king, and whose business it was to report to him whatever they saw

in his dominions; and others who were called the ears of the king, because they informed him of all that they heard. The grand duke Peter Leopold has improved upon this, and the same person is made to answer both purposes.

The friends of this system tell us that it saves the expense of an army; but they do not consider that it corrupts the morals of the people, causes disquiet and distrust in every family, and destroys all manner of confidence between man and man.*

But the Italian Government are wisely aware that the true source of the power of demagogues is the obstinacy and tyranny of rulers, and that a liberal Government is always the most powerful agent in the formation of a conservative people. Acting on this, the press has been made free, and political expression, though even sometimes savouring strongly of revolution, is tacitly tolerated.

But here we are in the grand old Palace of the Signoria of Florence, and in that famous hall abounding with rich historical associations. The Palace itself is so well known that any description of it here is unnecessary; and even those who have not had the good fortune of seeing that marvellous air tower, resting, as never tower rested before, on

* *Familiar Letters from Italy.*

bold machicolations, in all probability know it well from drawings and photographs. Proudly still does it rear its grand head aloft, without rent or crack in its sides. But how could it be otherwise, with holy relics of protecting saints enclosed in the stonework of the mighty battlements? The great bell, 'La Vacca Muglia,' as it was called, which summoned the Florentines of old to political and religious assemblies, still 'reads great sermons with its iron tongue.' But although guide-books, English and foreign, are pregnant with details of the Palazzo Vecchio, they do not tell us that beneath this tower, and near the inscription recording that memorable decree of the Florentine Republic declaring our Saviour to be their sovereign, is another inscription recently set up, announcing that at fifty-five minutes after midnight, in the first hour of the 16th day of March 1859, after an inspection of the returns of the national *plébiscite*, Tuscany was annexed to the kingdom of Italy, 366,571 voters out of 386,443 having declared in favour of that union under constitutional monarchy—an event of signal importance to Florence in her metropolitan condition.

As less probably is known of the vast Cinque Cento Hall in its present state, than of the Palazzo Vecchio generally, while we are waiting for the ringing of

the President's bell, let us look around us. The hall is 170 feet long and 85 broad; a vast space, but still not, as Florentines state, the largest room in the world. The height is prodigious; of this you can take full measure, for the public gallery is very close to the ceiling. Constructed in 1494, at the suggestion of Savonarola, for meetings of the great council of citizens, numbering one thousand, it was almost entirely remodelled by Vasari in 1565, who executed the enormous frescoes covering the upper part of its vast walls, representing events in the Florentine wars. There are others also, possessing considerable historical interest, by Ligozzi, Cigoli, and Passignano.

The general effect of this hall is extremely grand, amounting almost to sublimity. Nothing of the kind can be conceived finer than the richly gilded ceiling with its prodigious sweep hung on high without a break.

When it was resolved to transfer the seat of government to Florence, the choice of a building for the meetings of the national Parliament became a question of great moment. Several edifices were suggested, but the rooms in all were considered to be too small. Of course the Cinque Cento Hall in the Palazzo Vecchio was thought of, but it was conceived

that this would be as much too large as the others were too limited in accommodation. For, imbued with a reverential spirit of conservatism in favour of this most interesting mediæval monument, it was not at first contemplated adapting it to the requirements of the present national Assembly. However, when no better locality could be found, the national exchequer not permitting the expenditure necessary for a new and suitable Parliament house, it was determined to make such alterations in the old hall as would enable it to be used by the Assembly, care at the same time being taken to in no way permanently injure it. Accordingly, Signor Falconieri and Signor Falcini, the former an engineer, and the latter an architect, were engaged to make the necessary alterations; and, bearing in mind that the task was by no means facile, it must be conceded that they have accomplished the work very creditably.

As the 443 deputies would have been lost in the vast interior, it became necessary to curtail the area. This has been done, by cutting off one-third of the length of the hall by means of a screen rising to within twenty-five feet of the ceiling. Thus it is only by running your eye along the latter that you are aware of the great length of the hall. The

effect of this diminution is to cause Cosmo's stalwart warriors on their chargers to appear even larger than they really are; Vasari having represented the Duke and his troops as men of great stature, in all the grandeur of mediæval panoply.

Immediately in front of the screen, and elevated on a platform, are seats for the President and secretaries, and before these, on the floor, is a long table set apart for the use of the ministers. Around three sides of the hall, arranged in horseshoe form, and rising in gradation, are the deputies' seats, each seat being furnished with a convenient writing-desk, enabling the member to lock up his books of reference, papers, &c. Two galleries have been constructed at the end of the hall opposite the President, the lowest being set apart for the accommodation of ladies, the press and visitors provided with tickets of admission, the upper for the public generally.

The seats of the deputies and those in the galleries are covered with dark blue cloth, which is the colour of all the ornamental draperies. The general effect is appropriate, and the hall wears a solemn appearance, befitting the use to which it is applied. A full-length portrait of Victor Emmanuel is the only royal emblem that meets the eye. No mace glitters before the President, nor does the

latter endeavour to make his official dignity more impressive by wearing robes or a full-bottomed wig; so that, if invited to dinner by him, though disliking breeches and ruffles as much as the Hon. M.P. for Birmingham, you need be under no apprehension that you will have to don them. The ushers in waiting are alone distinguished by wearing a tri-coloured ribbon round their left arm, and a silver chain. Bearing in mind the vast size of the hall, it is remarkable how well the speakers are heard; but Italian orators rarely require to be told to speak up, their voices being naturally loud.

Although the Italian Parliament professedly imitates the British in many features, the ceremony of prayer is omitted. When a sufficient number of deputies are present to constitute a house the President rings his bell, and business commences. On the present occasion, although the sitting was announced to begin at one o'clock, it was nearly two before the President's bell was heard. Indeed, half an hour before the latter hour there were not above fifty deputies present. When the Chamber was declared open, about 300 were in the hall, including all the ministers. The majority of the deputies are middle-aged men, very few being young.*

* The present Italian Parliament is thus classed in the official returns: 2 princes, 2 dukes, 14 marquises, 25 counts, 22 knights, 29

After preliminary routine business, Scialoja rose and made his financial statement from his place at the minister's table.* It occupied three hours, including, however, several pauses; for it is the habit of parliamentary orators in Italy to sit down in the middle of their speeches and rest for from three to ten minutes, during which they take occasionally a glass of lemonade or other beverage. And poor Signor Scialoja evidently required both rest and refreshment. But indeed his task was far from easy. To our Chancellor of the Exchequer, blessed by a buoyant revenue always in excess of the expenditure, a financial statement for the coming year must be rather pleasant than otherwise; but to his official namesake who holds the national purse of the kingdom of Italy, of late years in a sad normal state of collapse, it can be by no means agreeable to announce, in the first place, a very serious deficit, and,

military officers, 4 naval officers, 13 merchants, 3 bankers, 8 public functionaries, 25 professors, 162 advocates, 19 doctors, 22 engineers, 9 publishers, and 84 rentiers.—Total 443. The annexation of Venetia will add fifty-three to this number.

* Commendatore Antonio Scialoja is a Neapolitan. Having acquired considerable reputation as a political economist, he was appointed to the chair of political economy in the University of Turin, elected a member of the Chamber of Deputies, and succeeded Signor Sella as Minister of Finance. Scialoja has published several important works on political economy. That entitled *Principii di Scienze Sociali*, is used in all the universities in the kingdom of Italy.

secondly, the necessary imposition of additional taxes.

Such, however, was Signor Scialoja's duty. The deficit of the year was, as he stated, no less than 262,000,000 francs (upwards of 10,000,000 sterling), and no means existed of making revenue and expenditure balance without adding considerably to taxation. Any diminution of the land or sea forces was of course not even hinted at by the minister, who, doubtless, shared the popular opinion with respect to the acquisition of Venetia. It was gratifying to hear that, although thus financially crippled, Signor Scialoja more than once insisted on the absolute necessity of keeping strict faith with the national creditors. This declaration, and all portions of the minister's speech having reference to Italian unity, though at the cost of a still greater annual expenditure than that of the past year, were vehemently applauded, especially by the public occupying the upper gallery. Any demonstration on the part of the latter is forbidden. But the law imposing silence appeared to me to be quite set at defiance, the President's bell being entirely drowned in the bravos that thundered from the strangers' gallery. Far different were the expressions when the minister sternly brought forward his plans for increasing the

revenue. As long as these did not affect the pockets of the people they were heard patiently, and, in some cases, even with approval. Thus the secularisation of ecclesiastical property elicited no complaints; but when the minister announced that an existing tax must be increased or a new one imposed, his audience in the public gallery quickly manifested their disapproval.

It is, indeed, most difficult to make Italians aware that if they yearn to be a great nation they must pay for the gratification of their ambition. Patriotism is severely tried when the absolute necessaries of life are obliged to be heavily taxed to enable government to maintain the national honour, and meet State demands which cannot be repudiated. But liberty is a luxury that must be paid for, and the sooner Italians become aware of this fact the better for themselves and their country.

Four Government reporters, working alternately, took down Signor Scialoja's speech; but those in the service of the public press did not attempt this word by word reproduction. The leading features only are noted; and as opinions necessarily differ respecting the importance of these, the accounts of speeches vary greatly in the papers. No two journals agreed in even the principal features of Signor Scialoja's

budget. Among the press reporters were ladies, who seemed to be as actively employed as their neighbours. Indeed, in this utilitarian age, when many women find profitable occupation in pursuits formerly held to be unfeminine, there is no reason why skilful lady stenographers should not be press reporters.

On subsequent visits to the Chamber of Deputies, when occupying a seat in the lower gallery, I heard several speakers, including La Marmora and other ministers; all, with scarcely an exception, spoke fluently. If talent be rare among the members of the Italian Parliament, assuredly they have the gift of speech. It is customary for the deputies generally to speak from their places; and they certainly convey the idea that they are 'dreadfully in earnest,' though clearly by no means agreed as to the best legislative measures.

The meetings, however, rarely extend beyond six o'clock P.M., at which hour our House of Commons may be said to commence its sittings. It would be quite impossible, excepting in cases of the most vital importance, to persuade the Italian deputies to sit at night; and if the past labours of this great 'talking house' may be taken as a fair specimen of its legislative capacity, it will be admitted that

there is no necessity for prolonging the hours of debate.

In all assemblies, the love for making speeches prevails, but nowhere will you find the *prurito di parlare* more rampant than in the Italian Parliament. And when to this is added the liberty that speakers have to pause periodically, their inner man being refreshed by copious libations of lemonade—while, if the speaker be at all eloquent, in the language of the journals, 'Moltissimi deputati vanno a congratularsi e stringere la mano all' oratore'—we cannot be surprised that speeches in the Italian Parliament should be long.

Hundreds are virtuously indignant at bureaucratic abuses, and nostrums and specifics are as plenty as figs, but wholesome laws, and especially those calculated to restore the finances of the country, are rare. Not unfrequently offensive personalities are exchanged, leading to hostile meetings in the Cascine at an early hour in the morning. This is the locality where Florentine honour generally repairs to be satisfied. The weapons usually chosen are swords; occasionally, however, pistols are preferred. During the last winter two deputies fought with these weapons, and exchanged no less than six shots without damage to either party. But, indeed,

duels in Florence are rarely attended with fatal results, which may be the reason why, although forbidden by law, they are a rather popular institution. Whenever Il Duello di Stenterello alle Cascine is performed at a theatre, the house is always crowded, Stenterello playing in this comedy a 'Bob Acres' part highly diverting to Italians.

But while criticising the Italian Parliament for its talkative tendencies, we may reasonably question whether other parliaments nearer home supposed to embody 'collective wisdom,' would not be of greater utility if there were less talking and more action. There is considerable truth in Mr. Carlyle's observation, 'that a sovereign with 658 heads all set to talk against each other in the presence of 30,000,000 of people, cannot do the work of sovereignty at all, but is smitten with eternal incompetence for that function by the law of nature itself.'

Dante, it may be remembered, rebuked the Florentines in his day for making many trivial laws, citing the Athenians and Lacedæmonians, who acted with greater judgment:—

Atene e Lacedemona che fenno
L' antiche leggi, e furon sì civili
Fecero al viver bene un picciol cenno.

Verso di te, che fai tanto sottili
Provedimenti, ch' a mezzo novembre
Non giunge quel che tu d' ottobre fili.

Let us hope that future Italian deputies will be wiser in their generation.

It may be interesting to observe that in voting in Florence black balls are regarded as affirmative, white as negative. This reversal of our custom arises from the circumstance, that when the Neri party were on one occasion victorious, it was resolved, out of compliment to them, at some debate, that all black balls should be considered as implying assent. The custom has been retained, and is observed in societies as well as in Parliament; so if you hear that your friend has been black-balled at the Jockey Club in Florence, you may congratulate him on his election.

To pass from a meeting of the deputies to one of the senators reminds you very much of going from our House of Commons to that of the Lords. In both countries the difference is great between the life and bustle of the Lower House and the calm inactivity pervading the Upper; and just as our House of Lords outshines the House of Commons in ornament, so does the Senate Chamber in Florence surpass the Cinque Cento Hall in the Palazzo Vecchio in brilliant decoration.

It is situated in the Uffizi, immediately under the first rooms of the gallery. Provided with your ticket of admission—seldom difficult to obtain, for

the meetings of the senate are not remarkable for their liveliness or interest—you ascend narrow stairs opening from the main flight, leading to the Uffizi gallery, and find yourself within a building very similar to a theatre. And so it was. Consult the City Chronicles, and you will find that this was the Court Theatre of Cosimo I., where theatrical performances were first held in Florence. It was inaugurated in 1585, and here were acted a vast number of ponderous plays, which have gone down the bottomless pit of oblivion—so ponderous that not unfrequently one play extended over several evenings. *Fiera*, by Michael Angelo, which was brought out here, occupied five evenings in the performance, an infliction that even Angelo's genius could scarcely render endurable.

Here, too, met the short-lived Tuscan Parliament of 1848, the garrulity of which, ephemeral as it was, sorely tried the patience of the Florentines. When it ceased to exist, the Corte Regia held its sittings within the chamber, and continued to meet here until Tuscany became united to the kingdom of Italy.

No interior in Florence is better suited for the meetings of the Senate than this. The main portion of the hall contains 300 seats, more than are

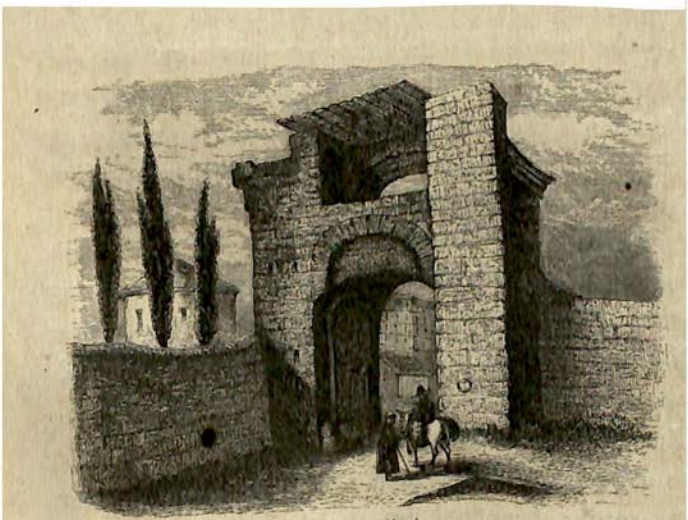
required for the present number of senators. They are disposed semicircularly, rising in six tiers, and are covered with crimson cloth. Where the stage formerly was, a platform is now placed, behind which is a handsome screen. Suspended on this is a full-length portrait of Victor Emmanuel, in a general's uniform. The President and secretaries occupy chairs on the platform. On either side of the latter are two galleries, disposed in the manner of loggie, occupying the site of the former boxes. Opposite the President another gallery has been erected, for the accommodation of the press and for strangers.

The whole of the interior has been lavishly decorated with crimson silk hangings, gilding, and frescoes. Colossal-winged Genii, and figures of the Virtues, appear on the ceiling, in the centre of which the word 'Italia' is inscribed.

Looking at all this glitter—for the decorations are by no means in good taste—you are certainly more prepared for a theatrical exhibition than for the speeches of grave signiors for whom all this upholstery work has been executed. However, their illustrious senatorships, as they are styled, could not be expected to meet in a plain room, and visitors are so far benefited by the lavish nature of the

decorations, that should the speeches be insipid, they can find some relief from the dulness by looking at the graceful arabesque patterns and allegorical pictures around them.

I may have been unfortunate, but I certainly did not hear any good orators in this chamber. All debating power is not confined to the Lower House; but, as a rule, you will be far more likely to be interested by attending the meetings in the ancient Cinque Cinto Hall, with its faded frescoes and plain decorations, than by those in the gilded chamber of the senators.



Porta Pinti.

CHAPTER X.

The Schoolmaster abroad in Italy—Official Educational Returns—State of Education in Florence—Elementary Schools—Endowment of Education by the State—A Florence Artisan and Mazzini—Society for Promoting Popular Education—Gymnastic Institutions in Florence—Universities—Professors in Florence—Lectures in the Academy of Fine Arts—Biblical Archæological Meetings—Dr. Pierotti—His Researches in Palestine—Academies in Florence—Their great number during the Middle Ages—The Platonic Academy—Accademia del Cimento—Accademia Secretorum Naturæ—Accademia Della Crusca—Present Home of the Academy—Roba of the Academy—Curious Shovels and Chairs—Dictionary of the Academy—The Georgofoli Society—Statue of Padre Banini—Scientific Soirée at the Royal Museum—Senatore Matteucci—Lecture on recently discovered Fossil Human Skull—Prehistoric Remains—Medals of Creation—Voltaire's Opinion on the Age of the World—Palæontological Collection in Florence—Electrical Experiments—Magnificent Specimens of Italian Cotton—Meteorology in Italy—Senatore Matteucci's Theory respecting Storms—Publications of the Royal Museum.

If Florence be injured in some social relations by having metropolitan honours thrust upon her, the lower classes will assuredly benefit by the change, in an educational point of view; for the schoolmaster is

more abroad there now, than when she was a provincial town. The proverb—

Firenze non si muove,
Se tutta non si dole,

is very truthful; and as adults did not appear to complain of defective education, not much pains were taken to educate youth. The official educational returns confirm this, as they show that, while in Tuscany 489 persons in 1,000 could not read and write, in Florence the numbers were 627 in 1,000, and as you proceeded further south from the capital greater ignorance existed, until in Sicily the numbers rose to 912 in 1,000.

With the view of remedying this state of affairs, the Italian Government has instituted elementary schools throughout the kingdom. These, at the commencement of 1866, amounted to 23,197, and the pupils to 913,152; and so general have they become that in March last, out of 7,730 communes in the kingdom, only 310 were unprovided with them. The schools are divided into upper and lower. In the latter, children generally remain two years, learning reading, writing, arithmetic, Italian grammar, and sacred history. In the upper schools the course, which also extends to two years, embraces

composition, geography, elementary geometry, and natural history. Education is not compulsory, but all communes are obliged to provide gratuitous instruction of the above nature, and in cases where the communes are too poor to defray the necessary expenses, grants are made by Government.

The total amount set apart by the State for education in 1866, was 2,964,500 francs. The educational establishments in Florence are well conducted, the system good, and the children, on the whole, smart and intelligent. There is evidently an increased desire on the part of the operatives who have families to take advantage of these schools. An artisan whom I had occasion to visit frequently during my sojourn in Florence, assured me that his children, four in number, had benefited greatly by these establishments. To my question, whether he had been urged to send them to school, he produced a tract containing the leading features of Mazzini's 'Duties of Man,' and assured me that it was in consequence of reading this publication, that he had resolved on giving his children the best education in his power. 'See, signor,' he said, drawing my attention to a page, is it not the duty of every parent to educate his children to the best of his ability?' As you may be interested to read Mazzini's injunctions

on this important subject, I translate them from the publication in question: —

'You must never lose sight of the fact that you are responsible and progressive beings. By progressive, I mean that you are created to improve your mental condition. And, above all, bear in mind that you will never succeed in this except by your own efforts. Have you a family committed to your charge? remember that it is the heart's country. Your aim and work should ever be to sanctify that family. And as education is the bread of the soul, do all in your power to obtain for yourselves and for your children, moral, useful, and intellectual education.'

It is greatly to be desired that the writer of this excellent advice would accept the olive-branch held out to him by the King of Italy, and instead of living an exile and a malcontent, would throw himself heartily into the good work that is to be done in that country, which he wishes us to believe is very dear to him.

At the same time that the elementary schools are largely patronised by Government, care is taken to provide them with effective teachers.* With this view, 25,300 masters and mistresses were trained in 1865, in normal schools; and it is a significant fact, as

bearing on the religious movement in Italy, that in no case are these teachers under ecclesiastical superiors.

There is also a very useful society in Italy for promoting popular education, the parent establishment of which is in Florence. The objects are, training masters, establishing schools, publishing books, and organising travelling museums and libraries. The members of this society pay an annual subscription of not less than ten francs, and life members 300 francs and upwards.

Nor, although not strictly educational in a mental point of view, must we overlook the gymnastic institutions in Florence, and throughout the kingdom of Italy. To nations as to individuals, the *mens sana in corpore sano* is applicable, and the people who are well developed physically as well as mentally will be always superior to those who regard all athletic games as mere childish pastimes.

The Italian Government have largely encouraged the formation of gymnastic establishments. At the beginning of this year, there were 255 gymnastic schools in the kingdom of Italy, attended by 17,923 men and 57 women.

I was present by invitation at a meeting of the Florence institution, called for the purpose of reor-

ganising the classes under a more efficient system. The circular convening the meeting, after dwelling on the great importance of gymnastics, added : 'Ma ora che la nostra patria è risorta, vi è bisogno di gioventù gagliarda e generosa, per la quale si abbia ad un tempo salda garanzia di un impossibile ritorno alla sofferta lunga umiliazione, e si pervenga, inoltre, a ridonare all' Italia quel posto di indipendenza, gloria ed onore che le spetta nel gran consesso delle nazioni.'

The meeting was attended by a large number of young noblemen and gentlemen. Cavaliere Sebastiano Fenzi presided, and an *esprit de corps* prevailed, that made it evident the members of the society regarded their physical training as an accomplishment which might possibly be turned to good account some day when measuring their strength against the foes of Italy.

Florence is still without a university, but the nineteen universities existing throughout the kingdom, and especially those at Pisa and Bologna, afford every facility for the education of the sons of the upper classes. And yet, though sound and varied knowledge is imparted in these establishments, the youth educated at them are by no means so numerous as might be expected. According to the official educational

statistics, there were 469 students at Bologna in 1865, and 596 at Pisa.

But though collegeless, Florence is not without professors of various branches of learning. There are attached to the Regio Istituto di Studi Superiori Pratici e di Perfezionamento, various professors paid by Government; and here are the courses of lectures that were given gratuitously in the session of 1865-6:—

Storia della Filosofia,	By Professor Luigi Ferai.
Filosofia della Storia,	„ Professor Giuseppe Ferrari.
Storia d' Italia,	„ Professor P. Villari.
Eloquenza e Poesia Italiana,	„ Professor Giambattista Giuliani.
Letteratura Latina,	„ Professor Ruggiero Bonghi.
Lingua e Letteratura Araba,	„ Professor Michele Amari.
Archeologia,	„ Professor Achille Gennavelli.
Lingue dell' estremo Oriente,	„ Professor Antelmo Severini.
Statistica,	„ Professor Attilio Zuccagni Orlandini.

The lectures are delivered in a handsome and capacious room belonging to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, No. 50 Via Ricasoli. Those by Professor Villari, the accomplished author of the Life of Savonarola, were well attended, the audience generally numbering about 250 ladies and gentlemen. Immediately behind the lecturer's table is a bust of Victor Emmanuel, with the usual bull-dog expressive-

ness, turning up his nose with great apparent disdain at the proceedings.

Here also were held the Libere Conferenze di Archeologia Biblica, under the presidency of Dr. Pierotti, who at his own expense undertook some years ago extremely interesting and valuable researches in Palestine. They extended over eight years, and have had principally for their object the illustration of obscure passages in the Bible. The subjects of the Conference embraced:—Jerusalem; its Origin, History, and Present Condition; the Sepulchre of Christ, and its Authenticity; Arab Legends, and their Relations to the Old Testament Histories; the Hydraulic Works in Palestine; Natural History of that Country; Missionary Labours; Manners and Customs of the Present People, as compared with those described in the Bible, &c. &c.

Remembering how numerous were the academies in Italy, and especially in Florence, during the middle ages, for the cultivation of science and literature, independently of the universities, it is remarkable how barren that city is now of these institutions. Tiraboschi, in his elaborate work,* gives a list of no fewer than 171 academies of the above nature in Italy. Cosmo the Pater Patriæ, born in 1369,

* *Storia del Let. Ital.*

although head of a vast commercial establishment which had counting-houses in all the chief cities of Europe and in the Levant, cultivated literature with great ardour, and his palace in Florence was the habitual resort of artists, poets, and learned men. He founded a Platonic Academy in Florence, nominally for studying Plato's works, though Italian literature, and especially the study and exposition of Dante's poetry, were also added. This academy was warmly patronised by Lorenzo the Magnificent. Hallam has drawn a charming picture of Lorenzo's villa on the slope of the Fiesolean Hill, and of the parties assembled there to discuss Platonic philosophy: 'In a villa overhanging the towers of Florence, on the steep slope of that lofty hill, crowned by the mother city, the ancient Fiesole, in gardens which Tully might have envied, with Ficino, Landino, and Politian at his side, he delighted his hours of leisure with the beautiful visions of Platonic philosophy, for which the summer stillness of an Italian sky appears the most genial accompaniment. Never could the sympathies of the soul with outward nature be more finely touched; never could more striking suggestions be presented to the philosopher and the statesman. Florence lay beneath them, not with all the magnificence that the later Medici have given her, but,

thanks to the piety of former times, presenting almost as varied an outline to the sky. Mountains bright with various hues, and clothed with wood, bounded the horizon, and, on most sides, at no great distance, but embosomed in these, were other villas and domains of his own; while the level country beyond bore witness to his agricultural improvements, the classic diversion of a statesman's cares.'*

Lorenzo's villa remains surrounded by its lovely gardens; but although many parties still assemble on its terraces, by invitation of its most kind and hospitable English proprietor, the conversation has few relations to Platonic philosophy, the arts being more patronised than the works of Plato.

It was at Florence, too, that the Accademia del Cimento was founded, celebrated as being the first institution whose members earnestly and successfully devoted themselves to the investigation of physical science. For although the Accademia Secretorum Naturæ, established at Naples in 1560, was the first scientific society, the researches made by its members cannot bear comparison with those of the members of the Del Cimento Institution. This was founded in 1657, under the patronage of the Grand Duke Ferdinand II., and by desire of his brother

* *History of Literature.*

Leopold, who acted on the advice of Viviani the eminent geometer. The academy assembled in the Ducal Palace, on which occasions, according to Tiraboschi, the Duke and his family mingled as equals with the most humble members of the academy.

Although this institution did not endure long, it did not cease to exist without leaving a record of its labours. A volume containing 'Reports of the Experiments made by the Academy,' was printed in 1666, including those on the supposed incompressibility of water, the gravity of bodies, and the property of electrical matter. The work is a substantial monument to the diligence and enquiring spirit of the members of the academy, among whom were Torricelli and Castellio, disciples of Galileo. When we find such an institution as this unable to exist beyond a few years, we cannot wonder that of the many others of a similar nature which were established in Italy, with two remarkable exceptions, the names of only a few remain known to us.

These exceptions are the Lyncean Academy, still existing at Rome, and the Della Crusca at Florence. This society, or academy rather, was founded in 1582, for the purpose of purifying the national language; its name, literally, of the bran or chaff, being in allusion

to the principal purpose of the members of the academy, which was to sift the flour of language from the bran.

I hoped to have had an opportunity of attending a meeting of the Della Cruscans in Florence, but was disappointed. Our generally veracious and most admirable guide-book states (edition for 1865) that the academy assembles in the Palazzo Riccardi, but that stately building will know the Della Cruscans no more. The change of capital, fatal to many ancient institutions in Florence, turned the Cruscans out of the Palazzo Riccardi, which was required for Government purposes, and now where the members met, telegraphic wires flash messages to all parts of the globe. And not only were the Cruscans gone, but the officials to whom I applied, could give me no information as to the academy's new location, the majority indeed being not even aware of the existence of such an institution. At length, however, I discovered that the *roba* of the academy had been transferred to the Convent of San Marco, and that there I should find their fantastic shovel-backed chairs. So to the convent I went, obtained admittance, and had the satisfaction of finding the curious goods and chattels of the academy in the fine library of the monks, or apartment rather; for

the books of the convent are so few and far between, and withal in such a dilapidated condition, that it cannot be said to possess a library in the generally accepted sense of this term. The books of the Della Cruscans piled high on the floor, were far more numerous than those on the surrounding shelves.

The custode who had given me admission, was evidently at a loss to understand what possible interest the old *roba* of the Academy Della Crusca could possess—to him none—for when I expressed a wish to remain some time in the apartment to make one or two sketches, he went his way; taking, however, such good care of me that he locked me in the hall. And now, seated in the midst of the worldly property of the Cruscans, in their academic sense, I will tell you something of the academy.

This arose out of the Accademia Degli Umidi, afterwards the Accademia Fiorentina, instituted in 1540. From this again sprung, in 1582, the Crusconi, as they were originally entitled; but the members resolved, in 1584, 'a nominare' as they say in their archives, 'la loro brigata Accademia della Crusca.' In this year they published their first work.*

* This is entitled, *Degli Accademia della Crusca, difesa dell' Orlando Furioso del l'Ariosto contra 'l dialogo dell' Epica poesia di Camillo Pellegrino. Firenze, per Domenico Manzani Stampator della Crusca.* 1584.

It is stated that the academy were led to undertake a defence of Ariosto, and to elevate him above Tasso, in consequence of the latter having spoken of the Florentines as being under the yoke of the Medici, whom he regarded as tyrants, the academy enjoying at the time the patronage of the Grand Dukes. Certainly the preference they have given to Ariosto over Tasso is not endorsed by Italian scholars.

At this period the academy was engaged in drawing up programmes, &c. for spectacles on occasions of festivities, the members being requested to lay before the academy any remarkable designs or inventions for masks, games, &c. A very curious tract relating to these spectacles, which at that period were extensively patronised in Florence, bears a representation of a buratto, or boulting machine, on the frontispiece, but the famous motto of the academy 'Il più bel fior ne coglie,' was not adopted until March 14, 1590, when the numbers of the academicians and reputation of the academy had increased. The former now assumed names symbolical of a miller's calling,* having reference, as far as possible, to that branch of philosophy they re-

* Among the names assumed were *infarinato, reminato, gramolato, insaccato*, &c.

solved on investigating; the name, with a group of flowers, being painted on the front of a shovel. Many hundreds of these shovels were lying in the room, stacked in heaps. The front of each shovel was ornamented with extremely well-painted flowers, surmounted by the academic name of the proprietor, and an appropriate motto; the backs of the shovels were red, and to the end of the handles, which were about two feet long, rings were attached, to enable them to be hung round the meeting-room of the academy.

The chairs of the members are made in imitation of a Florentine baker's basket, turned bottom side upwards, and painted red. There was also a model of a flour-dressing machine, which is placed in a conspicuous position in the meeting-room during the sittings of the academy, and a considerable number of manuscript archives of the academy, relating principally to its history.

The sixteenth century was remarkable in Italy, and especially in Tuscany, for the philological enthusiasm that prevailed, particularly with reference to the study of the Italian language. The members of the Della Crusca Academy resolved to devote themselves to the latter pursuit, and the 6th of March 1591 was, says their historian Zannoni, in

his interesting account of the academy,* the memorable day on which they determined to commence their great work of purifying the Italian language and of preparing their famous dictionary. Each member undertook to keep a book, in which he was to record all observations, &c. relating to the spelling, pronunciation, and signification of Italian words, with any other philological notes that might be deemed important or interesting. Among the members of the academy who pledged themselves to this performance was Michael Angelo.

The members laboured so diligently that in the course of two years their authorities for the Italian language were selected. These were entitled 'Testi di Lingua,' and in 1611 the first edition of their dictionary appeared; a second edition was printed in Venice in 1691, and a third and fourth in Florence in the years 1729 and 1738.

Notwithstanding these results of their labours, the academy did not flourish; the date of the fourth edition of their dictionary may be said to be that of their academic dissolution. This appears to have been in a great measure brought about by a series of lampoons and pasquinades. The institution was

* *Storia dell' Accademia della Crusca, del Segretario G. B. Zannoni.* Firenze, 1848.

addressed as 'Il Toscanismo e la Crusca, ossia il Cruscante impazzato;' and individual members at all remarkable for their philological or antiquarian proclivities, were severely ridiculed.

Meanwhile, however, their dictionary, though by no means perfect, enjoyed considerable circulation; and, on a call for a new edition, the academy was revived in 1814. Whether under royal patronage, and in its new home, it will make itself known in the scientific world, remains to be seen. That there is good work to be done by the academy is certain, and it is equally certain that there are many Florentine gentlemen whose philological erudition and ripe scholarship might be most usefully employed in association with members of this academy.

The most active, and certainly one of the most useful, scientific societies in Florence is the Georgofoli, established principally for the promotion of agricultural science, but devoted to other kindred subjects. The members assemble in rooms placed at their disposal by the Accademia delle Belle Arti. As usual on the continent, Sunday is the day of meeting, and, in the case of this society, the hour is one o'clock. On the day that I attended there were fourteen members and eleven visitors present. The paper read was on the cattle plague. It led to a

long and animated discussion, in which some visitors took part. These are admitted without introduction.

Behind the President's chair is a life-size statue in marble of Banini, with the appropriate inscription—

Bisogna dilatarle il cuóre
Con qualche respiro di Libertà.

Banini, who was a priest of Siena, was a most enlightened man, highly informed on subjects connected with political economy, especially those affecting the social condition and progress of Italy, and one of the earliest apostles of free trade.

But if you desire to see the savants of Florence, you must attend one of the scientific soirées given during the winter season in the Royal Museum.

It was a pleasant discovery to find among cards of invitation to balls and evening parties, one from the director of the above institution, to a soirée given by himself and the professors of the Museum. The director is Senatore Matteucci, whom His Majesty Victor Emmanuel has delighted to honour by making him a member of the Upper House of Parliament. It is satisfactory, however, to be able to state that Senatore Matteucci has by no means relinquished those scientific pursuits which have

given him a European reputation, for others of a political nature; and thus, whenever his duties as a senator do not engage his time, he devotes himself to science. In his official capacity as Director of the Royal Museum, Senator and Professor Matteucci is at the head of science in Florence; and it will be conceded by all who have the advantage of knowing the labours of this philosopher, that the high position could not be more worthily filled.

Thinking of times past, I could not help wishing that the scientific party to which I was invited had been held in that charming villa at Fiesole, to which allusion has been made, where Lorenzo assembled kindred spirits to discuss philosophy. But as this could not be, there is certainly no other building in Florence better adapted for a scientific *réunion* than the Museum. Exteriorly plain, if not almost repulsive, the interior abounds in interest; and although the rooms are not large, they are extremely numerous, and contain rich and rare scientific treasures.

The visitors were received by the director, and entertained by a variety of interesting objects exhibited under glass-cases. At nine o'clock, as is customary at these *réunions*, we were summoned to hear a discourse from one of the professors of the Museum. The subject chosen for this evening was

the human cranium discovered a few months ago in a cutting on the Arentina Railway, in the Val di Chiana. The lecturer was Professor Cocchi, head of the geological department of the Museum. Many persons will remember the great interest that was excited by the discovery made at the close of 1863, of a human jaw in the drift at Moulin Quignon, near Abbeville, which was undoubtedly fossil, though its age was a matter of doubt. Even greater interest was occasioned among scientific men in Italy by the discovery of this fossil skull, which appertains to a very remote period of this world's age, and may have been that of a Troglodyte. It was found in a compact argillaceous stratum, about fifty feet below the level of the adjoining country. A few weeks after it was brought to light, the jaw of a horse and the tooth of an elephant were found in the same locality. The equine relic was pronounced to be a variety of an extinct species known to palæontologists. The tooth was that of an ancient species of elephant, remains of which have been frequently found in the vicinity of Arezzo, not far from the Val di Chiana.

Reasoning on these and other facts, Professor Cocchi proceeded to demonstrate, in a very lucid and conclusive manner, that the skull in question

belonged to a prehistoric epoch contemporaneous with that in which the animals existed, remains of which were found near the skull; and he then gave a most interesting and graphic description of the probable aspect of the country where the skull was found, as it appeared in the early pleiocene ages. Professor Cocchi then eloquently asserted, that this discovery, regarded as chronological testimony, so far from weakening our faith in Scriptural revelation, should strengthen it; for there was no evidence in the now known great age of our planet at all at variance with important events set forth in the Bible. Those, he added, must have warped and even morbid mental vision, who can see in these discoveries of fossil remains any features to alarm them. They are the most precious 'medals of creation,' and should be duly treasured as such by us.*

It was almost startling to hear such sentiments uttered in halls where science formerly was sadly fettered by religious superstition and bigotry.

Within a few feet of the platform from which

* Prehistoric remains are by no means uncommon in Italy. Clay vases, stone implements, pile-works on the shores of lakes, and vestiges of villages, similar, for the most part, to those found in Scandinavia and Switzerland, have been discovered. A very interesting account of these and other prehistoric remains will be found in Professor Gastaldi's work on the remains of animals and objects in Northern and Central Italy.

Professor Cocchi addressed us, are the frescoes in the Tribune of Galileo, representing that philosopher, in 1633, undergoing examination before the Inquisition, for his enunciation of scientific truths;* and long after that period, other so-called religious tribunals muzzled deep-thinking men, who, long in advance of their age, proclaimed truths which bigotry pronounced to be heresy.

'Que le monde est une vieille Putain qui cache bien son âge,' said Voltaire, not knowing, when he uttered these remarkable words, how well they would be confirmed by recent palæontological discoveries. Whether they would have had any effect on his religious scepticism is perhaps doubtful. To us, however, they should be pregnant with instruction, and more than ever impress us with the great and sublime truth that 'one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.'

The Museum of Florence is singularly rich in fossil remains, taking precedence over all other palæontological collections in Italy. The specimens,

* It is very much to be desired that the original process against Galileo should be made public. The record was carried off to Paris in 1809, restored to Pope Gregory XVI., and deposited by Pius IX. among the archives in the Vatican. Until the publication of this MS. *in extenso*, we shall not be fully informed of all the particulars relating to Galileo and the Inquisition.

many of which are extremely perfect, comprise remains of the mastodon, elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, tiger, hyæna, gigantic deer, &c.*

At the conclusion of Professor Cocchi's lecture, Professor Magrini, of Milan, entertained us by some extremely beautiful and novel electrical experiments, having reference to electricity as a motive power, and also as an agent for producing musical sounds.

Professor Parlatore, the eminent botanist, then conducted a party through the department under his charge. Here are preserved several rare and valuable collections of plants, including the late Mr. Webb's fine herbarium, bequeathed by that gentleman to the Museum, and the exquisite wax models of vegetable anatomy illustrative of the structure and diseases of plants, prepared by the celebrated Amici. The magnified representations of the vine disease, and the parasites producing it, are highly interesting. Professor Parlatore also showed us several magnificent specimens of cotton grown in the south of Italy, almost, if not quite, equal in staple to the celebrated sea-island cotton. These specimens pos-

* By Professor Cocchi's desire, I take this opportunity of informing conchologists, that the Museum at Florence will be happy to exchange duplicates of their admirable collection of Italian fossil shells for sets of British fossil shells.

sess great interest with reference to the endeavours that are being made by the Government of Italy to encourage the growth of this plant as an article of commerce. Prizes for the best samples of cotton, and for cotton of any description grown on land newly prepared for this crop, are periodically offered, with, as Professor Parlatore informed us, beneficial results. And when we remember that cotton has been cultivated in Southern Italy from time immemorial, and that during the great wars of Napoleon I. and the continental blockade, the Italian peninsula supplied almost the whole of Europe with cotton, there is no reason why this plant should not enter again, to some extent at least, into the commerce of Italy.

Professor Parlatore also informed us that letters had been recently received from Signor Beccari, who is engaged in examining the botany of Borneo, and also from Signor De Filippi, Professor of Botany at Turin, and Signor Giglioli, who are making botanical collections in China and Japan, and that the botanical department of the Museum will in all probability be considerably enriched by the labours of these gentlemen.

We now returned to the reception-hall, where refreshments were served, including excellent *Punch à*

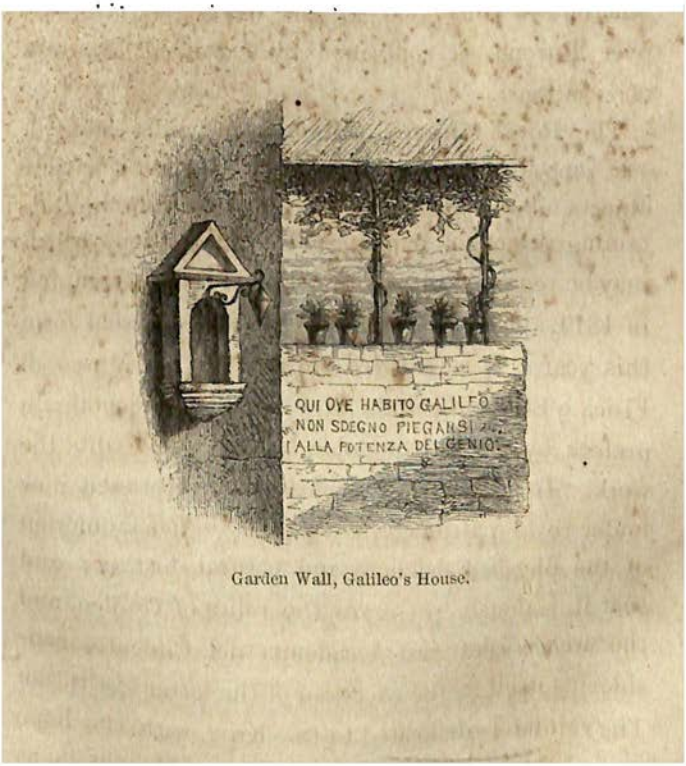
la Romaine, which would have found high favour with even so fastidious a judge as Brillat Saverin. Thus, as will be seen, the words on my card of invitation, 'ad una conversazione di amici desiderosi della cultura scientifica,' were realised by the evening, which was one of great pleasure and gratification.

Independently of his duties as Director of the Royal Museum, Senatore Matteucci has lately been charged with the organisation of a meteorological series of observations throughout the kingdom of Italy. To this end he has selected eight stations at the principal ports in the peninsula, and the directors of these stations are to transmit every morning by telegraph, to the central office in Florence, at the Royal Museum, the barometric and thermometric observations made at specified hours the preceding day, and the indications of the instruments at the moment when the despatch is transmitted. Senatore Matteucci desires the friendly cooperation of other countries in this work, and hopes that before long a perfect system of meteorological observations may be established throughout Europe. He states, as the result of his own observations, which have been very extensive, that the tempests coming from the Atlantic, first felt in Europe on the western coast of Ireland, are those of most frequent occurrence in the Me-

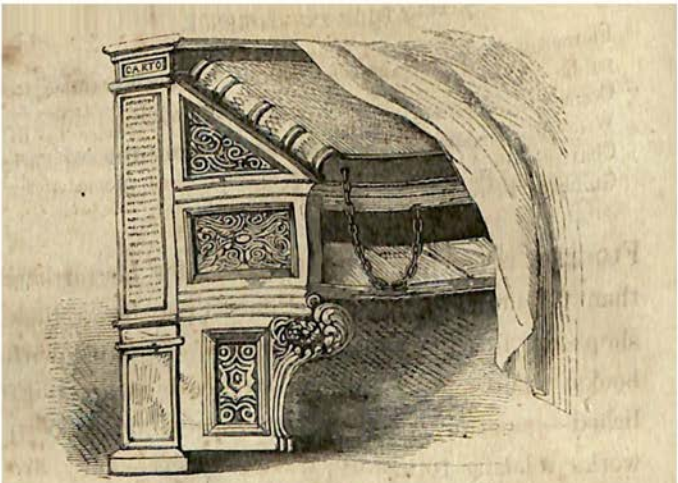
diterranean and Adriatic ports. These tempests, common in winter, but rare in summer, traverse England, portions of France and Switzerland, and arrive on the coasts of Italy with a speed of propagation varying from ten to sixty miles, and even more, per hour. It will be extremely interesting to ascertain if this view of the march of tempests over Europe is confirmed by extended accurate observations.

The Royal Museum of Florence, besides being a vast repository of natural history and other scientific objects, now publishes a large quarto volume containing scientific papers. This publication, which may be regarded as a continuation of that interrupted in 1814, appears for the first time in its present form this year. It is entitled, 'Annali del R. Museo di Fisica e Storia Naturale di Firenze,' and contains a preface by the indefatigable Director, who edits the work. In this we are told that the Museum now under royal patronage, is devoted to the promotion of the physical sciences and natural history; and that it jealously preserves the relics of Galileo, and the archives of the Accademia del Cimento, considering itself as the successor of the latter institution The volume is dedicated to the King, with the hope that the scientific labours that it records may be as

instrumental in promoting the prosperity and renown of Italy, as the sword so ably wielded by His Majesty has been the means of enlarging the original kingdom of Sardinia.



Garden Wall, Galileo's House.



Termination of Bookcase, Laurenziana Library.

CHAPTER XI.

State of Literature in Florence—Dearth of Modern Works—The Jockey Club—Caricatures—Public Libraries—Vieussieux's Library—The Magliabechian or National Library—Antonio Magliabechi—His Youth—Apprenticed to a Goldsmith—His love for Books—Becomes Assistant to a Bookseller, and Librarian to Cosmo III.—Magliabechi's House—Book Stores—A Paradise of Spiders—Anagram on his Name—His Will—Lami's Library—Present State of the National Library—Signor Vannucci—The Laurenziana Library—Public Libraries in Italy—The Riccardi Library—Remarkable Manuscript Volumes—Early Banking Operations in Florence—A Modern Finance King—The Peruzzis—Bardis—Scalis—Acciajolis—Dante's Designation of the Peruzzi—Early Florentine Commerce—Extensive Wool Trade—Large Loan to Edward III.—His Repudiation of the Debt—Bankruptcy of the

Florentine Bankers—Consequent Downfall of the Florentine Republic—Curious Domestic Particulars—Extravagant Dresses—Cosmetics used by Florentines—A Merchant's Advice to his Wife—Commendatore Peruzzi—Archivio Centrale di Stato—Early Charters—Papal Bulls—Archives of suppressed Monasteries—Guilds of Florence—Literary Pabulum.

FLORENCE is much more remarkable for her artistic than for her literary productions. The booksellers' shops are few in number, and badly supplied with books. Theological and political writings are published—generally in pamphlet form—but modern works relating to history, travel, or archæology, are rarely to be seen. If we look at the bookstalls, we find them loaded with weak novels, and Italian translations of filthy French publications, sold at extremely low prices, while others, scarcely less mischievous, are freely exposed for sale in booksellers' shops. To this dearth of useful knowledge an exception must be made in favour of statistical publications, which apparently enjoy a fair circulation. There are also some agricultural periodicals, which frequently contain useful articles, and a few others of a scientific nature; but these are rarely seen, excepting in the houses of scientific men.

Having been accorded the *entrée* to the Jockey Club, I had the curiosity to look over the stock of literary *pabulum* in the so-called library of that

institution. Certainly a club with such a title as this is not precisely the place where you would expect to find an extensive library of reference; but as being the best club in Florence, and though 'horsey' in name, possessing among its numerous members many Florentines utterly indifferent to the turf, you might naturally hope to see a few useful books. But you would be grievously disappointed. Grateful remembrances of hospitality and kindness preclude further criticism in this direction, but I trust that no offence will be taken if a hope be expressed that the handsome rooms of the first club of the metropolis of the kingdom of Italy will ere long contain a library.

But let it not be supposed that Florence is the only city in Italy afflicted with a dearth of good modern literature. The same may be said of other cities in the peninsula. Caricatures, journals, satirical sketches, pasquinades, abound. No country or period has been more fertile in witty malice and inventiveness allied to artistic skill than Italy, but in solid modern literature she is sadly deficient. Notwithstanding this unproductiveness, Florence possesses many attractions to a literary student. There are eight public libraries in the city, all easy of access: and besides these, Vieussieux's excellent

circulating library has the great advantage of enabling you to read the books at home. This library is not so well known as it deserves to be. It contains upwards of 80,000 judiciously selected volumes, acquired for the most part by the late M. Vieussieux, a zealous bibliopole, to whose memory as a citizen who rendered good service to the State, the municipality of Florence have erected a tablet with an appropriate inscription over the entrance to his library in the Piazza San Trinita.

At the head of the public libraries is the Magliabechian, or, as it is now generally called, the National Library—though it appears scarcely just to the memory of its remarkable founder to disconnect his name from his books. Few men indeed are more deserving of being honourably and gratefully remembered by Florentines than Antonio Magliabechi; for to him are they indebted for this fine library. The love for books is happily far from rare, but Magliabechi's bibliomaniasm was astounding. Born in 1633, he was apprenticed to a goldsmith on the Ponte Vecchio and as this calling at that period involved more than mere mechanical labour, young Magliabechi received instructions in design, and was even taught Latin, which, it is stated, he acquired with great facility, and soon contrived to pick up other branches of

knowledge. The consequences of these acquisitions were fatal to young Magliabechi's professional prospects. When he should have been learning his master's craft, he read; his habit being to convey books surreptitiously into the goldsmith's shop, and devour their contents at every possible opportunity. Reproofs being of no avail, corrective measures, not unfrequently of a very severe nature, were tried to crush this literary yearning, but in vain. When deprived of his books during the day, he read them at night, often sitting up to a late hour in the morning, until his health gave way, and he was utterly useless to his master. Despairing of reforming his apprentice, the goldsmith cancelled his indentures, and Magliabechi, to his infinite delight, was set free. His worldly prospects were far from bright; but these gave him no concern. Books to him were bodily, as well as mental, pabulum; in truth, he seemed to live upon them. But his tastes soon found congenial employment. He became a bookseller's assistant. In this capacity he was supremely happy. In the course of a wonderfully short time he made acquaintance with all the books to which he had access, could find any volume in the dark, and rendered himself familiar with their contents, retaining all that was valuable in a most remarkable

manner. He held that there was no book so bad but that some information more or less valuable could be gleaned from it. As his reading was as omniverous as it was insatiable, he soon became surcharged with an amazing mass of encyclopædical knowledge.

Such a man could not long remain unknown. His wonderful mental powers caused him to be noticed by Michel Ermini, librarian to the Cardinal Leopold de Medecis, who introduced him to Cosmo III. and in the course of a short time he became the Duke's librarian. But although the Duke provided handsome apartments for Magliabechi in the Pitti Palace, neither these, nor other advantages, could induce him to relinquish his house in the Via della Scala, nearly opposite the Farmacia of the monks of Santa Maria Novella, where pleasant perfumes and rare liqueurs continue to be manufactured.

The house was by no means large or commodious, but, probably, no house was ever so stored with books as this. From top to bottom every room, passage, and closet literally ran over with books The entrance hall, too, was so full that you could scarcely find foot room; yet here Magliabechi lived, sitting and sleeping on his books, and having for

attendant an old man, who was turned out every evening, there being no sleeping accommodation for him in the house.

But, wonderful to say, this chaos of literature, rendered still more chaotic and bewildering to others by the dirt and cobwebs in which the books were shrouded, was no apparent inconvenience to their owner. From the walls, which were lined with books, or from the piles encumbering every room, Magliabechi was able to extract any volume that he required. He would not even permit the dust on his literary treasures to be removed, nor the spiders, which formed large colonies among them, to be disturbed. Among the peculiarities of this strange man, was his fondness for these insects. A raid among them by a tidy housemaid, would have driven him mad. The bibliopolist's book-stores must have been a very paradise of spiders, for it is recorded that he often preferred abstaining from consulting some much wanted book to rudely disturbing one of this happy family.* That his person should have been in keeping with his

* This love for spiders has been shared by other eminent men of books and letters. The late Professor Wilson, who was a general lover of animals, had an especial fondness for spiders. 'I love spiders,' he says in one of his essays. 'Look at the lineal descendant of Arachne, how beautifully she descends from the chair of Christopher North to the lower regions of our earth.'

dwelling, is only what we might expect. A dirtier, more shabby, or more ill-dressed man, was not to be seen in Florence. Nor was he more careful respecting his diet. 'Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es,' says Brillat Savarin. But we may doubt whether even the accomplished author of the 'Physiologie du Goût,' would have arrived at a just conclusion respecting Magliabechi from his meals, and for the all-sufficient reason, that he rarely partook of these, in the usual sense of the word; his custom being, when nature's demands became too violent to be resisted, to go into the first shops that presented themselves, and buy either a little salted fish, or fruits, which he might often be seen eating as he walked through the streets. Chaucer's description of the Oxford student is indeed singularly applicable to Magliabechi:—

> For him was dearer at his bed's head
> Twenty books clothed in black and red
> Of Aristotle and his philosophy,
> Than robes rich, or fiddle or psaltry,
> All that he might of his friends have lent
> On books and on learning he it spent.
> Of study took he most care and heed,
> Not a word spoke he more than was need.

He was well known to every Florentine; and as he walked daily from his house to the Pitti Palace, drivers, riders, and pedestrians made way to let him

pass: for he was so absorbed in literary meditation that he took no heed of carriages, horses, or human beings. And so he lived his life—by no means brief, for he had numbered eighty-one years when he died—accumulating books to the last, and taking apparently no pleasure in anything mundane, but his library and an occasional pipe. To these, however, we should probably add the gratification that he derived from assisting literary students. To them, and indeed to all comers, his prodigious mental stores were always freely open, and when these failed, he was willing that his books should be consulted, always provided that the spiders and their branching webs should not be disturbed. With young Giovanni Gastone, heir to the reigning Duke, he held frequent converse on literature; and so European was his reputation, that men of erudition came to Florence from distant parts of the continent, to consult him on matters relating to works on which they were engaged. One of these, with great felicity, made the following anagram on his Latinised name, Antonius Magliabechius—

Is unus bibliotheca magna.

Thus Florentines have long been justly proud of Magliabechi; but what endears him especially to them is the fact, that shortly before his death he

bequeathed his vast book-wealth to the poor literary students of his native town, as well as all his other property, for the purpose of renting a house to contain his library. But this property was not, as may be supposed, large, amounting, in fact, to only about 50*l.* a year; quite insufficient to carry out efficiently the purposes of his bequest. For besides the books purchased by Magliabechi, amounting to many thousands, he received a great number of presents from literati. The want of funds was, however, happily met by Giovanni Gastone, now Grand Duke, who cherished a grateful remembrance of the pleasant and profitable hours he had spent with Magliabechi. The Duke ordered that a portion of the Uffizi should be set apart for preserving his books, and further directed that the national finances should be charged with the salary of a librarian, and that one copy of every book published in Tuscany, should be sent to the library, which was henceforth to bear the name of its founder.

These decrees, with the exception of the name, are still in force; and now that Florence has become the capital of Italy, measures are being taken to increase the efficiency of this public establishment.

Recurring to its history, we may add, that shortly after the library was located in the Uffizi, it received

many important acquisitions by gift and purchase, and particularly 18,500 volumes from the Medico-Palatina Library, acquired by the Grand Dukes, during the Medicean rule; the highly important and valuable library of the famous antiquary Giovanni Lami, and that of the Avvocato Salvagnoli, formerly Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs in Tuscany.

At present, according to the chief librarian, the library contains 178,000 printed volumes; and 12,800 MSS. Among these are several literary treasures, the most important of which are shown to visitors.

Compared to our unique and almost luxurious national library reading-room, that in the national library of Florence is rude and comfortless; but, on the other hand, you are not kept waiting more than a few minutes for any book you may require. Seats, too, are always available. At no time, during several visits that I paid to the library, were there more than thirty-five persons in the reading-room; the average number having been considerably less. The head librarian, Signor Otto Vannucci, a gentleman of great erudition, and his assistants, are extremely courteous, and, judging from my own experience, any application for information receives the kindest attention.

The same remark applies to all the other libraries that I visited, in each of which the literary man will

find rich and rare treasures.* The Laurenziana, with its unrivalled collection of MSS. still chained to their richly-carved bookcases, remains, it is much to be regretted, unfinished. Michael Angelo's vestibule and staircase are precisely in the condition that they were left in the time of the Medici.

In all the libraries, ample space for study exists, far exceeding the requirements of readers, these being very few in number.† The most remarkable literary treasures and curiosities are duly chronicled in guide-books, and therefore require no mention here; but one, that has rather recently come to light in the course of adapting the Riccardi Palace for the purposes of Government, is so interesting as to merit notice.

It consists of four large MS. folio volumes, bound in vellum, containing the history of the banking operations carried on by the Peruzzis from 1308 to

* As a proof of the unexplored nature of these literary storehouses, it may be stated, that it is only within a few years that a great monument of Galileo's labours, long given up for lost, has been recovered. This philosopher's elaborate series of observations of the satellites of Jupiter, with tables and ephemerides, drawn up for the purpose of computing the longitude, were found by Alberti in the library of the Pitti Palace, and have been published by him in the recent edition of Galileo's works.

† There are 126 public libraries in the kingdom of Italy, but, unhappily, they are so little used that, as an Italian writer has observed, over the entrance of most of these establishments might be written *E quì si dorme.*

1346, with many other details, throwing great light on Florentine and European history in the beginning of the fourteenth century.

There are few periods in the history of Florence more remarkable than that of the foundation and growth of the banking business. The great Florence financiers, whose names became known throughout the civilised word, not only enriched themselves, but signally aided in building up the renown of the Florentine republic.

It has been related that one of our great modern finance kings was once asked by an inquisitive, and probably somewhat envious individual, how he contrived to make enormous profits. 'All trade operations cannot,' he replied, 'be divulged, but this I may tell you, that one of my fundamental rules is never to have any dealings with an unfortunate man; for if such a person be unable to benefit himself, how can I possibly expect him to be of any use to me?'

The first Florence bankers seem to have observed this rule, though, as we shall see, they were not invariably fortunate even when their transactions were with eminently fortunate individuals. The enormous business and financial operations of the Florentine bankers are well-known matters of his-

tory, but their *modus operandi*, the tasks entrusted to their agents abroad, and the precise nature of the relations which subsisted between them and their foreign correspondents, have never been known, and we should probably have remained in ignorance respecting these matters had not these interesting manuscript volumes been discovered. Besides affording a voluminous and most interesting account of the manner in which the vast financial operations were conducted in Florence, these banking registers give a list of no less than eighty banking establishments in connection with the Florence houses.

They were kept by members of the Peruzzi family, who, with the Bardis, Scalis, and Acciajolis, were the four most eminent bankers in Florence. Dante called the Peruzzis 'quei della pera,' from their arms, and their name often appears in the history of their city.

The records are in excellent preservation, written in a clear hand by Giotto, Guido, and Arnoldo Peruzzi, and, according to a MS. note, the last volume was produced in court on the occasion of the bankruptcy of the house.*

* The volumes, which I have had the pleasure of examining, are numbered 2,471–4 in the catalogue of the MSS. in the Riccardi Library.

As early as 1203, the Florentines began to push their commerce throughout the continent. In that year they made a trading compact with the Bolognese, and in 1281 effected another with Lucca, Pisa, and Genoa. These naturally involved extensive financial operations, the magnitude of which may be conceived from the fact that, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, there existed in Florence 325 manufactories of woollen cloth,* and 23 of silk, damask, and brocade.

To feed this commerce with money, no less than 4,234 lbs. weight of gold was annually coined into florins. The extent of the financial operations of Florence compared to those of other countries, is apparent from the fact, that the revenue of England

* The trade archives in the Uffizi show that when Florence was at the height of her manufacturing prosperity, no less than 190 wools from various countries were used in that city. Among those specified are many from England, some bearing whimsical Italian names. Thus Cotswold is called *Codisgualdo*; Chichester, *Scricestri*; Yorkshire, *Torcia*.

So essentially did the woollen manufacture contribute to the prosperity of Florence, that when John de Medicis addressed the Florentines shortly before his death, he said that he should die happier if he could see his people attending more to the woollen manufacture and less to that of silk (se in seta non vi videsse entrare, are the precise words). This address was spoken on Feb. 20, 1428, and although the Florentines had thus early entered, as John de Medicis says, into the manufacture of silk, it was not until a century after that Henry II., king of France, wore silk stockings.

at this period scarcely exceeded 150,000*l.*, while that of France was very little more.

We cannot be surprised that this wealth should have not only attracted the attention of needy monarchs, but also in many cases excited their cupidity. It was indeed an evil day for the Peruzzis and Bardis, when, unheeding the Scriptural advice, not to 'put your trust in princes,' they unfortunately advanced 1,365,000 gold florins to our Edward III., to enable that king to carry on his war with France, the revenues of England being entirely inadequate to defray the expense of a war with so powerful a kingdom as France.

Edward was victorious, and, as will be remembered, he even had the satisfaction of crowning his triumph by making the King of France a prisoner, and confining him in the Tower of London; but he seems to have acted in accordance with the Italian proverb, 'Passato il pericolo, gabbato il Santo.' The saints in his case were the Florentine bankers; to them he prayed for help in the form of the sinews of war, promising, as we read in these antique banking records, all manner of grateful acknowledgments, besides repayment of debt with interest. But not only was the latter not paid, but the principal itself was never repaid, and the result was, that on

January 17, 1345, the great Florence banking-houses failed; the King of England being at that period indebted to them in the sum of 1,500,000 gold florins.*

The downfall of these two great commercial pillars involved that of almost all the Florentine companies; for, although repeated applications were made for the restoration of the loan, or a part thereof, all royal and solemn promises and obligations were set aside, and the money was never repaid. But the King's want of honour produced even a more unfortunate result than the bankruptcy of the houses which had assisted him in the hour of need. Their ruin sapped the prosperity of the republic of Florence, which speedily declined, and ultimately succumbed under the pressure, in the first instance, of the Ciompi, and afterwards of the monarchical bad government and tyranny even of the Medici.†

The history of these and other financial operations of scarcely less magnitude are given in these bank-

* The Fiorino d' oro, in the time of the Florentine republic, was worth about five shillings and threepence.

† Those who may be desirous of being well informed on all details connected with this portion of Florentine history, are referred to Mr. Thomas Trollope's excellent *History of the Republic of Florence.* A resident for many years in that city, and in all that relates to its history 'a full man,' Mr. Trollope's volumes are at once exhaustive, instructive, and interesting.

ing records. They also state the salaries paid to their managers and agents, 160 in number, scattered over all parts of the world, and, what cannot fail to be extremely interesting to modern bankers, the balance-sheets of the banking-houses from 1331 to 1335.

The importance of the Peruzzis is evident from the fact stated in the records, that the gold test for the standard coin was always contributed by them, their standard gold florin being that which was invariably adopted by Government.

Nor is the matter in these interesting volumes confined to financial details. Extremely curious information is given relating to domestic manners and customs. The household expenditure of the Peruzzis and other eminent Florentine families, is noted, and we have an account of the marriage of a Peruzzi with a member of the house of Oricellai. A perusal of these details may lead to the belief that the great extravagance that existed in Florence had, as well as the nonpayment of our King's debt, considerable effect on the fortunes of the Florentine bankers. Be this as it may, it is abundantly evident that costly toilets were quite as common in Florence in those days as they are now in Paris or London.

Dante lashed this extravagance in these lines,

alluding to the former simplicity of the dress of the women of Florence:—

> Non avea catenella, non corona,
> Non donne contigiate, non cintura
> Che fosse a veder più che la persona.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the dresses of ladies had attained enormous prices. We read of silk-dresses costing 300*l.* and 400*l.*; that 500*l.* was frequently spent on veils embroidered with pearls, and that other head decorations were so elaborate and costly, than an edict was passed in 1326, prohibiting them from being worn. The decree appears to have been a source of great sorrow to the ladies of Florence, for they prayed the wife of Robert, Duke of Calabria, who was on a visit in Florence, to intercede with the authorities to obtain permission to wear these much-prized ornaments.

This Robert and his Duchess were evidently much thought of in Florence; for in these banking records, we are told that five hundred florins were expended on building a large kitchen outside the city walls, for the purpose of cooking the viands for a great banquet, given by the Peruzzis to the Duke when he was their guest in their palace in the Borgo dei Greci.

The Florentine women also appear to have been

as curious and lavish in the use of cosmetics, as were the wives of the Roman emperors. There is a very curious account given of Angelo Pandolfini, who having become wealthy by commerce, filled the high office of Gonfaloniére on three occasions, in the years 1414—1420 and 1431. He married a Strozzi, and on the day of the marriage, instead of giving himself up to the joy suitable to the occasion, seems to have taken the very unusual course of reading his wife a long homily on her duties. It is too long to be reproduced here, but that part relating to cosmetics is so curious as to merit insertion. After alluding incidentally to the displeasure felt by God towards women using cosmetics, he adds: 'Dear wife of my soul, if you love me, you will never paint your face with any compounds, which, although they may cause you to shine brilliantly for a few short hours, will assuredly make you appear so pale, and even repulsive, in the morning, that your loving husband may turn away from you in disgust. For be assured,' he adds, with Shakspearian causticity, 'that even the most cunningly compounded cosmetics are but slow poisons, which will infallibly injure your skin, and render you prematurely wrinkled, ugly, and old.'

It appears, however, that notwithstanding Pandol-

fini's sapient counsel, his wife one night, on the occasion of a large party, was tempted to have recourse to a *soupçon* of colour from a rouge pot. But slightly as her cheeks were tinged, Pandolfini's sharp eyes detected the imposition before his guests arrived. Unwilling, however, to hurt his wife's feelings, he exclaimed, 'Ah, you have, I see, been making a little too free with your jam pots! Go, my dear, wash your face; for our friends must not see you as you are.' The wife obeyed her husband, and we do not find that she ever rouged again, at least in his presence.

It is not a little singular, that the task of bringing the contents of these unique and most interesting banking registers before the public, should have been reserved to a descendant of the Peruzzi, who was head of the banking-house in 1293, Gonfaloniére of the Florentine republic in 1297, besides filling other high offices. It was my privilege and happiness to spend several evenings with the present representative of this illustrious family, during which he kindly gave me much interesting information, partly embodied in these pages, and placed in my hands several parchment bonds for loans, contracted by various monarchs, and other high personages.*

* It is greatly to be regretted that war, especially disastrous and fatal to all literary undertakings, should stay the publication of

In close relationship to the libraries in Florence, is the Archivio Centrale di Stato, occupying one hundred and four rooms in the Uffizi. There is not, it must be admitted, any great promise of interest here, but the rooms nevertheless are well worth visiting. Here are preserved, in admirable order, upwards of 400,000 charters, diplomatic documents, Papal bulls, &c. many of which are in the form of vellum rolls. There are 382 prior to the year 1000; the oldest bears the venerable date of 20th September 716. The archives, belonging to suppressed monasteries, are extremely numerous, filling several apartments. But probably those entitled 'Archivi delle Arti,' having reference to the trading corporations of Florence, will be considered the most interesting. They are contained in a large hall elegantly decorated with the arms of the various corporations, and portraits of some of the famous men who belonged to them. Thus Dante appears as a member of the Guild of Physicians and Apothecaries, in 1297; Cosimo de' Medici, of that of Money-changers, in 1404; Luca Pitti, of the Woolstaplers, in 1428; Machiavelli, of the Vintners,

Commendatore Peruzzi's work. In a letter recently received from him, he says: 'My book was on the eve of publication when the war broke out; now we have to pay the cost thereof, and publishers are not disposed to make literary ventures.'

in 1378; Dino Compagni, of the Silk Merchants, in 1280; and Guicciardini of the Lawyers, in 1527. There are twenty-two guilds, thus designated: lawyers, merchants, money-changers, or financiers, woolstaplers, silk merchants, physicians, leather merchants, butchers, shoemakers, smiths, sculptors and stone carvers, brokers, vintners, innkeepers, cheesemongers, tanners, cuirass and sword makers, locksmiths and braziers, flail-makers, carpenters, bakers, and oil merchants.

The archives of these companies contain, as I was informed by the director of the establishment, extremely curious and interesting information, bearing on the commerce and trade of Florence. This gentleman also stated, that the archives generally under his care have been very little used. In consequence of the recent re-arrangement that they have undergone, and the existence of compendious catalogues, reference to them is rendered extremely easy, while permission to consult and copy the documents is liberally accorded. All copies are duly authenticated.

Thus, it will be seen that, if the Florentines have a formidable quantity of mental waste land to be tilled, there is ample seed to produce an abundant

harvest. Italian literature was the great storehouse from which Shakspeare drew many of his choicest treasures, and we cannot doubt that diligent search would be repaid by the discovery of many others.

Chapel on south end of Ponte alla Carraja.

CHAPTER XII.

The Press of Italy—Repeal of the Censorship—Indifference of Italians to good Newspapers—Titles of Journals published in Florence—Proportion of Newspapers to the Population of various Cities—Caricatures—'La Scossa Ellettrica'—'L'Italie'—'La Nazione'—Its Advertisements—Broad Sheets—Ballad Literature—A Popular Ballad—The Priest and the Widow.

If it be true, as is alleged, that the press of Italy is absolutely free, the proprietors and editors of journals have not taken full advantage of the concession made by Government; at least, the tone of the political articles is not so lofty or independent as might

be expected under conditions of absolute liberty. Remembering how long journalism in Italy groaned under the yoke of censorship, on the abolishment of this terrible engine, we might naturally expect to see stirring articles revelling, so to speak, in freedom, and at the same time full of suggestions respecting Italy's political future, and the best means of utilising her enormous undeveloped resources.

But expectation in this direction will be disappointed. The newspapers of Florence are utterly unworthy of the metropolis of a nation taking rank as the fifth European power; and this remark applies to the newspaper press throughout Italy. But this, perhaps, is not so much the fault of editors and writers, as it is of the public. Italians, as a people, are, as we have shown in the last chapter, extremely indifferent to solid literature. The literary pabulum that makes the 'full man,' is not palatable to them. Politics, it is true, interest them, but they always appear more inclined to talk politics than to read them. Thus, although Italy reads her newspaper, an Italian gentleman finds it possible to eat his breakfast without the journal of the day being on his table. Reading, indeed, of any kind, is not yet a favourite occupation among Italians.

The list on the following page contains the titles of

the journals published last winter and spring in Florence. It has not hitherto been the privilege of Florence periodicals to enjoy, as a rule, more than a very ephemeral existence; therefore, it may be taken for granted, that while some of these are defunct, others have started into existence:—

Appennino.
Archivio Politico Italiano.
Avvenire.
Bandiera del Popolo.
Boccherini.
Buon Umore.
Carlo Goldoni.
Chiacchiera.
Civita Italiana.
Commercio.
Consigliere degli Artisti.
Consigliere degli Artisti Illustrato.
Corriere Italiano.
Cronaca Grigia.
Cronaca Medica.
Diritto.
Eco della Moda.
Eco della Verità.
Economista Nazionale.
Fede e Ragione.
Firenze.
Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia.
Gazzetta del Popolo.
Gazzetta delle Campagne.
Gazzetta dei Tribunali.
Gazzetta di Firenze.
Gioventù.
Giornale della Marina.
Il Romanziera.
Imparziale Medicale.
Indipendenza Cattolica.
Italia Militare.
L'Italie.
La Legge.
La Guardia Nazionale.
L'Emporio Pittoresco.
Lampione.
La Scaccia Pensieri.
La Settimana Illustrato.
Monitore dei Comuni.
Nazione.
Opinione.
Proletario.
Pungolo di Firenze.
Rivista Forestale.
Rivista Italiana.
Rivista Italica.
Scossa Ellettrica.
Sericultura.
Sistro.
Temporale.
Vera Buona Novella.
*Vespa.**

* In 1865 there were 372 newspapers published in the kingdom of Italy: of these, 42 were published in Florence, being one paper to

The average price of these journals is one penny. By far the best of the illustrated papers are those devoted to caricatures, and these, as a rule, increase in excellence as they become more anti-papal. When the artists sit down to depict priests in the worst light, they appear to take particular pains, just as some sculptors of old seem to have bestowed their greatest abilities on the production of obscene works. Thus, 'La Scossa Ellettrica,' not satisfied by frequent pictorial satirical attacks on the Pope, has, for illustrated heading, an allegorical figure of Science discharging a powerful galvanic battery, which prostrates the Pope, represented in a very humiliating position, and an Austrian soldier who is killed by the shock.

One of the best daily papers in Florence is the 'Italie,' published in French, for the use of foreigners as well as educated Italians, who are, for the most part, well acquainted with this language. But the leading journal at present is the 'Nazione.' It is constitutional in politics, and, on the whole, ably conducted. But when we talk of the leading journal of a great kingdom, the mighty broad sheets of our

every 111 inhabitants; 44 in Naples, one to every 120 inhabitants; 41 in Genoa, one to every 136 inhabitants; 44 in Turin, one to every 171 inhabitants; and 51 in Milan, one to every 93 inhabitants.

'Times' rise in imagination before us; half pregnant with news from all quarters of the globe, and half bristling with advertisements relating to every conceivable phase of humanity. Compared to this giant among newspapers, the 'Nazione' is a mere dwarf. It consists of one sheet, two feet long, by one and a half broad. The first and second pages are occupied by political matters, the third by subjects of general interest, and the fourth by advertisements. These, in a leading paper, throw considerable light on the commerce, trade, and pursuits of the people. It would be a serious undertaking to give even the first word of the advertisements in one copy of the 'Times,' but, as will be seen, the advertisements in the 'Nazione,' are by no means numerous. Here is a faithful transcript of those taken from one number in April last. They are given in the order in which they are printed:—

'Opodeldoc d' Arnica.' Warranted to cure all colds, &c. 'Revalenta Arabica of Du Barry di Londra;' headed 'Non più Medicina,' and certified to radically cure 'le cattive digestioni,' &c. &c. 'Injection Brou,' an infallible preservative cure, &c. Wool shop, a modest advertisement of good wools at *prezzi fissi*. 'Mieline di Gelson,' a certain remedy for restoring hair. 'L' Esule ed una Donna,'

a poem of great interest to all classes, price 30 cents. 'Olio antioftalmico,' by the simple use of which all maladies to which the human eye is subjected, will be immediately cured. Medicine for fathers of families, or every man his own doctor. The only way to preserve oneself from, to avoid, cure, and heal short-dated diseases, in the brief space of five days, by means of the Pagliano syrup, a purifier and refresher of the blood and humours, &c. &c.

This Pagliano is the Holloway of Florence, and the advertisement is in English, as here reproduced.

'On demande un maître de langue suédoise.' A life of Massimo d'Azeglio, price 1 franc. Then, in enormous type, we have Dr. Pagliano again, but this time he addresses his countrymen in their own language. 'Sciroppo Pagliano Depurativo e Rinfrescativo del sangue,' &c. &c. 'Vero Guano del Peru,' sold at 310 francs, a barrel containing one thousand kilogrammes. 'Tinterna Orientale per i Capelli e la Barba.' Then follows another modest advertisement of a linen shop. Next 'Sciroppo e Pasta,' warranted to cure all chest diseases. A Railway Guide. Cigars and newspapers on sale at * * * *. Myrrhine, the only true dentrifice. 'Non più Capelli Bianchi.' 'Un jeune Français désire se marier. Il offre tous les renseignements désirables et possède une belle fortune.'

A villa consisting of fourteen rooms, garden, offices, &c. desirably situated, to be sold—no price given. Immediate and infallible cure for certain diseases. Vino Riminese; from the cellars of the Baron Ricasoli, first quality, 3 francs a bottle; second quality, 2 francs. Raccolta Dantesca, followed by a list of Dante's works. And is ubiquitous Holloway not here? you may ask. Indeed he is. *Pillole ed Unguente* is the heading of his advertisement, followed by the well-known statement, that his two famous nostrums are used throughout the world.

This batch of advertisements does not give us a very high idea of the commerce or trade of Florence, excepting that of quack medicines, which, if the number of advertisements be any criterion, must flourish in the capital. And is it not sad to see how poorly literature figures amidst this heap of rubbish? But let us not despair. Italy is, happily, now somewhat more than a mere geographical expression. The north, full of enterprise and activity, has wedded the more indolent south, and Florence cannot remain the capital of the kingdom without her press being in all respects greatly improved.

In close relationship to the newspapers in Florence, are 'broad sheets,' issued when news of

importance likely to be interesting has been received. These sheets are carried about the city generally by boys, and sold for one halfpenny. One of the most popular is entitled *La Bandiera del Popolo.* Occasionally news assumes a political form, and in the guise of songs obtains considerable patronage. But this species of literature loves, in Florence as in London, the dark rather than the light, the subjects generally being of a morbid nature.

According to a man who kept a stall for the sale of this literature in Florence, and whom I occasionally visited in order to inspect his stock-in-trade, tales in verse of the exploits of Garibaldi, or Gallibardi, as he is popularly called, are most in favour. Next to these are stirring relations of the deeds of banditti, their capture and execution.

But, out of some two hundred stories in verse exposed for sale, that which enjoyed the largest circulation, as far as the experience of this ballad-monger went, was the relation of how a priest robbed a widow of 9,000 francs. The story, a copy of which I purchased, is entitled, 'Fatto Straordinario successo a Cremona il giorno 8 Febbraio 1864, di un Prete che si vestì da Angelo per pigliare 9 mila lire ad una Vedova.'

It consists of twenty-one stanzas, and thus commences. The words are literally transcribed:—

Ascoltate questo fatto,
Che successe in Lombardia,
Non vi dico un bugia,
Ma la pura verità,
Come un prete per danaro
Si vesti da cherubino
Fece un atto d' assassino
E una vera crudeltà.

It then proceeds to tell how a woman, having lost her husband, was suddenly reduced to absolute poverty. In this sad condition, not knowing what to do, her husband appeared to her at night, and told her that if she would purchase a *terno* in the lottery, consisting of three numbers, which he communicated to her, she would obtain a prize. But where to obtain the money to buy the *terno* was perplexing. While pondering over the difficulty, her eye fell on an ivory crucifix handsomely carved that had long been in her family, and which, as a work of high art, she had heard was of considerable value. Tempted by the prospect of obtaining the promised lottery prize, she sold the crucifix, and with the proceeds purchased the desired *terno*. Her husband was no false prophet. The *terno* was drawn, and the widow received 9,000 francs.

This sudden acquisition, attracted, of course, the

immediate attention of her neighbours, including the priest of her parish, to whom she incautiously communicated the circumstances by which she had become possessed of the money to purchase the lottery ticket. On receiving the intelligence, he unhesitatingly pronounced the widow to be a female Judas who had sold her Saviour, and that heavy punishments would most certainly fall on her. The poor woman, horribly frightened by the picture the priest drew of these, beseeched him to inform her whether there was any way by which she could escape from such a doom. At length, but not before she was half dead with alarm, the priest—so runs the story—told her that she might not only save her soul alive, but liberate her husband from purgatory, where he was suffering great misery, if she would give up the money she had gained in the lottery. Consenting, he then proceeded to inform her, that if she would be in the churchyard where her husband had been buried, on a certain night, the latter would appear to her in the form of an angel, and receive the money from her, which would be applied to saying masses for his soul and for her. The widow acted on this advice, and parted with her money to the priest, who, as will of course be anticipated, assumed the character of the angel.

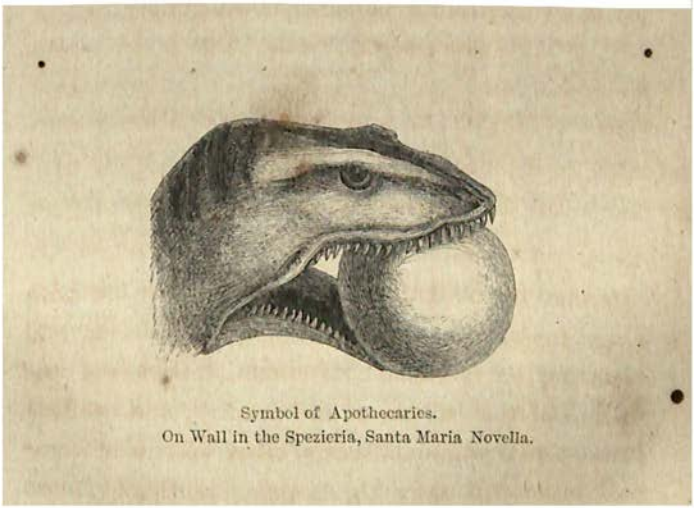
But he had forgotten that woman is not remarkable for the faculty of suppressing her thoughts, being, on the contrary, generally under the necessity of speaking what she thinks. And as our widow was no exception to this rule, she had sought consolation in her distress by communicating her strange story to more than one acquaintance. The result was, that just as the priest pocketed her money, he was pounced on by the police, who conveyed him to prison, and after undergoing trial, was duly punished, to the great joy of all parties, the ballad thus concluding:—

Viva sempre la giustizia
Che punisce i masnadieri
Lode sia ai carabinieri
Che hanno fatto il lor dover.
E scoperta l' impostura
Di quel prete ingannatore
Sempre lode, gloria, onore,
A quei buon carabinier.

It may be thought that too much space has been given to this tale. But on the principle, as laid down by an eminent statesman, 'Give me the writing of the ballads of the country, and while I place at your command every other species of composition, I will sway the popular sentiment more powerfully than all your writers, political and moral, can do by any other agency or influence,' I have considered that a production which, if my informant

be veracious, is more extensively purchased than any other of his literary wares, merits the publicity here given to it.

This fact is the more interesting, as illustrating the eagerness on the part of the people to seize on any story that tends to lower the moral character of the priesthood. For, in all probability, if the sinner in this case had been a layman, the ballad would not find many purchasers.



Symbol of Apothecaries.
On Wall in the Spezieria, Santa Maria Novella.

CHAPTER XIII.

Design to Erect a new Art Gallery in Florence—Present Disposition of Statues and Pictures—Proposed Marriage of the Venus de Medici—Crowded state of the Art Treasures—Risk to which the Pictures are exposed—The great Artist 'Copiasi'—Organisation of Public Galleries—The great Social Evil of England—How to combat it—International Horticultural Exhibition—The Grand Duke's Madonna—Copyists in Florence—Delusion respecting Copies of Famous Pictures—Applications to copy the Madonna del Seggiola—Changes in Uffizi Gallery—Painting by Lorenzo il Monaco—Recovery of Art Treasures—Seal of Emperor Augustus—Collection of Coins—Story respecting a supposed 'Unique' Coin—Private Objects—Mr. Powers—His Clytia—Modelling Clay from Alabama—Statue of Mr. Everett—M. Dupré's Studio—Monument to Catalani—Cavour's Monument—Figures of Bacchus—M. Dupré's Daughter—Signor Fedi—Colossal Group of Rape of Polyxena—Spirit of Cellini—Mr. Fuller—Group of Glaucus and Ione—Fantacchiotti—Statue of Goldoni—Professors Pallastrini and Ussi—Marko, Signorini, and Chiavacci—M. Fallardeau—Palazzo Machiavelli—Mrs. Hay's new Picture—Mussini's Picture of Victor Emmanuel receiving Castruccio's Sword—Agnerni—Fresco Painting—Patronage of Art by the Italian Government—Important Decision respecting taking Casts of Bronzes—Ghiberti's Gates of the Baptistery.

AMONG the good intentions of the Italian Government, contingent on the state of the national purse, is the design to erect a suitable building to contain the inestimable art treasures in the Pitti Palace and the Uffizi.

All who are acquainted with the statues and pictures in these galleries, must deplore that they are not seen to better advantage. Can anything be conceived more faulty and unartistic than the disposition of the masterpieces of art in the Tribune? I have never entered that sacred temple of art, without thinking that the spirits of the artists of those immortal works must be sorely vexed, by their being thus treated. Had the marriage of the Apollo Belvidere and the Venus de' Medici been carried into effect, as was humorously proposed by one of the Grand Dukes, and the usual result of marriages followed, by the lady occupying the home of her husband, the public would have been so far benefited by the change, that the Venus would have been seen to far better advantage than she is in her present situation, where it is impossible to view her from any position, without having your eye warped and distracted by pictures immediately behind her. And while the view of this statue, and others in the Tribune, is greatly spoiled by the pictures, the view of the latter is sadly marred by the statues.

The passionless and 'lunar beauty of sculpture' should not be exposed to the light, necessary in many cases to illumine the sunny glow of pictures. Independently of the incongruity of mixing statues

and pictures together, as they are in the Tribune, the pictures themselves are open to much criticism, not as regards their artistic merits, but their grouping. Titian's women, in all their gorgeous voluptuousness, Annibal Caracci's Bacchante, or Ruben's Hercules, should assuredly not be placed in juxtaposition with the celestial purity of Raphael's Madonna del Cardellino, Guido's Virgin, or Andrea del Sarto's Madonna and Child.

But, indeed, it is an injustice to any grand work of art, to place it in an apartment crowded with other artistic masterpieces. To duly appreciate and enjoy a fine picture or statue, the work should be isolated, and, especially in the latter case, provided with a judiciously coloured background. Those who are acquainted with the Bologna Gallery, will doubtless remember how soothing it is, after gazing with aching eyes on the masterpieces in that grand gallery, to find the gem of the collection enshrined, as is fitting, in a room alone, where it can be studied and enjoyed without the disturbing influence of contiguous pictures or statues.

But there is even a worse evil than this, arising out of the present galleries in Florence, and the crowded state of their art treasures. Many works of enormous value hanging in bad lights, are constantly

moved to allow of their being copied. You can rarely visit the galleries without seeing immense pictures that have been displaced, standing on the floors. The directors of the Pitti and Uffizi Galleries assured me that few circumstances connected with their duties and responsibilities weigh more heavily on them than the risk the pictures are exposed to from these periodical removals. As you pass through the galleries, blank spaces constantly meet the eye, explained by a tablet, with the word *copiasi* hanging at the bottom of the space. So frequently is this seen, that, as you may remember, a visitor, who we must presume was not very learned in Italian or Italian artists, conceiving that the tablets in question, hanging as they do immediately above the picture under the blank space, referred to them, declared on his return from Florence, that the guide-books were all wrong in their information respecting the Italian masters, for that the great artist of Italy was not Raphael, or Titian, Guido, or Andrea del Sarto, but *Copiasi*, whose name was to be seen over innumerable pictures.

Taking these matters into consideration, it is greatly to be desired that, before long, the art treasures of Florence may be placed in a new building, where they shall be not only preserved with the

least possible risk of injury, but at the same time seen to the greatest advantage.

There is, perhaps, no branch of organisation more important than that which has reference to the enjoyment of the people, and the more that this can be promoted, provided always that the tendency of the enjoyment is to improve the national taste, and to elevate the working classes in the social scale, the better for the community.

To accomplish this, it is not only necessary to supply rational enjoyments, but also that these should be accessible with the least possible difficulty. When a nation possesses a fine collection of pictures, they should be exhibited to the best advantage, at times most convenient to the working classes, and such accommodation should be provided as will enable the works of art to be viewed with ease. Thus, when governments, to whom is confided the care of important museums or picture-galleries, fail to render such institutions accessible to the public, they can not be considered just or faithful stewards. And, unhappily, in England, on the only day when the working classes and their families can conveniently see our museums and galleries, they are as a rule rigorously closed.

The great social evil of our country is drunken-

ness. Open our museums on Sunday, and you at once create formidable rivals to the gin-palaces, which would assuredly lose many customers. It is, indeed, most lamentable that opportunities afforded to combat our fire-water demon, should be almost entirely neglected. Not even the most rigid sectarian, who proclaims eternal damnation from the platform of Exeter Hall to breakers of the commandments of a God 'slow to anger, and of infinite mercy,' would, it is to be hoped, contend that it is unholy to look on the Creator's works on Sunday. And yet, had the directors of the recent International Horticultural Exhibition in London, proposed to give the working classes the power of seeing that noble display of God's beautiful and wonderful creations, by opening the Exhibition on Sunday afternoon, they would have been branded as desecrators of God's Sabbath, and churches and chapels innumerable would have echoed condemnation from the mouths of bigoted preachers.

It will be a grand triumph of good sense and justice, when our Government, following the wise example set by themselves at Kew and Hampton Court, open the British and South Kensington Museums on Sunday; and the high purposes of these great national establishments can never be considered

to have been thoroughly carried into effect until they are thus made available to the people.

Although the royal galleries of Florence are of a very permanent nature, rarely receiving additions to the collections, a few exceptions may be noted. The flight of the Grand Duke has given the public access to a glorious Raphael, known as the 'Grand Duke's Madonna,' which was so dear to His Highness, that he had made arrangements to carry it away with him. But, fortunately for Florence, the departure of Tuscany's last Duke was so precipitate that he was constrained to reduce his *impedimenta* to very limited proportions; and though his Madonna was packed for travel, she did not leave the Palace, her peregrinations being confined to her being moved from the private apartments to the picture-gallery; to which his present Majesty of Italy made no objection, his predilection, as is generally understood, being more in favour of living beauties than canvas Madonnas. This Madonna is a favourite subject of the numerous copyists in Florence, and bids fair to become as familiar to us as the famous Madonna del Seggiola. But you must not be at all sure, if you purchase a copy of this picture, that it has been copied from the original. Next to the popular delusion existing respecting the

acquisition of 'old masters,' which in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred are modern pictures ingeniously made to resemble ancient paintings, by a variety of dealer's tricks, is the almost general belief that copies of famous pictures purchased at Rome, Florence, or other Italian cities, have been faithfully copied from the originals. The following facts will demonstrate how rare true copies are. The copying regulations at the Pitti Gallery permit only one copyist at a time to have access to the Madonna del Seggiola or the Madonna del Gran Duca. The time allowed to copy the former picture is two months, and as all copyists, with very rare exceptions, avail themselves of the maximum period, it is evident that only six copies can be made of this *chef d'oeuvre* in the year. Last winter there were ninety-six applicants on the director's list for permission to copy this picture. Thus, if all copyists take the full time accorded them, it is evident that sixteen years must elapse before the last applicant on the list can hope to have access to the picture. It is almost unnecessary to add, that copyists have recourse to other means to execute the order of an impatient customer.

Turning to the Uffizi, some changes of consequence have been made there. Many of the bronzes have been removed to the Bargello, to their great advan-

tage, and that of the statues, which being less crowded are seen to better effect.

The picture-gallery has recently acquired a very curious and interesting old painting by Lorenzo il Monaco, executed in 1413. It represents the coronation of the Virgin, and contains upwards of one hundred figures. This remarkable painting, which is in the form of a Gothic triptych, like many of the contemporary religious works, may be said to breathe the 'beauty of holiness:' it was painted for the high altar of the Angioli, Lorenzo's monastery in Florence, and is more interesting from the circumstance, that after being long lost sight of, it was discovered in the convent of Cerreto, near Certaldo. Few of Fra Angelico's paintings are more religiously beautiful than this. In Le Monnier's edition of Vasari, it is described as so admirable that no language could do justice to it. Happily, it does not appear to have been restored, or even retouched; and as long as the present excellent director holds dominion over the pictures in the Uffizi, it will be spared the desecration of restoration. Would that all guardians of these sacred trusts felt that—

> Wherever a fresco peels and drops,
> Wherever an outline weakens and wanes,
> Till the latest life in the painting stops,
> Stands one whom each fainter pulse-tick pains.

Most fortunately, the greater portion of the gems and jewels abstracted by thieves a few years ago from the Uffizi have been recovered, and the collections are now nearly as perfect as they were before the robbery took place; more complete in some departments, the Museum having lately received valuable acquisitions in the form of exquisite gems, and metal work, and especially medals and coins. Do not fail to see the seal of the Emperor Augustus, recently found, and the exquisite rings and gems bequeathed to Florence by our countryman Mr. Currie.

But, probably, the most valuable department in an historical point of view, as it certainly is one of the most interesting, is that of the coins, recently greatly increased by purchases and gifts. Here, indeed, is a collection that would excite the cupidity of many numismatists, and might prove dangerous to persons to whom the possession of an unique coin appears to be the *summum bonum* of human happiness. Could Mr. Oldbuck have seen the collection, he would have exclaimed with even more emphasis than was customary, when his eyes glistened at the sight of choice antiquities — 'Rari—et rariores—etiam rarissimi!' For here are many unique specimens of extraordinary coins, though, as the director admitted, it is frequently the fate of so-called unique

coins that have long reigned supreme, to be dethroned, by the discovery of duplicate and superior specimens. Do you remember the curious story illustrative of this fact when a gentleman was well-nigh coming to grief?

A remarkable collection of coins was advertised for sale, including, as was alleged, an unique specimen of excessive value. One morning, when the collection was on view, a gentleman went to the rooms expressly to see this unique coin, but being unable to find it, requested one of the auctioneers to show it to him. The latter went to the glass-case in which it had been placed, but much to his surprise, the coin was not there, nor could it be found in any of the other cases. Greatly distressed and alarmed, the auctioneer closed the doors of the rooms, and addressing some half-dozen visitors who were present, stated, that as he was quite certain that the missing coin was in a certain case when the doors were opened in the morning, he could come to no other conclusion than that it had been abstracted by a visitor; and that, moreover, as no person had left the rooms since they had been opened, it was therefore evident that the coin had been taken by one of the visitors then present. Under these circumstances, he trusted that the gentlemen present would not object to

being searched. However unwelcome this proposition was, all agreed to it, but one gentleman, who not only declined submitting to the operation, but declared that he would use every effort in his power to prevent it. At the same time, he emphatically asserted that he had not taken the coin. The position of affairs, unpleasant as they were, became more painful by the advent of the police; but, happily, just when the recalcitrant gentleman was about to be given in charge, one of the auctioneer's clerks appeared on the scene. On being questioned respecting the coin, he immediately withdrew it from his pocket, stating that when he left the auction rooms, there was no person in attendance, and being aware of the great value of the coin, he thought, during his absence, that it would be safer in his possession, than under a glass-case.

The treasure having been so happily recovered, apologies were tendered to the gentleman for the suspicions entertained respecting him, and as they turned out to be totally unfounded, he was requested to state why he objected to be searched. 'Because,' was his reply, taking a coin from his pocket, 'here is the duplicate of your so-called unique coin.' It is almost unnecessary to add, that he had gone to the auction-rooms to examine the latter, believing

that he was the fortunate possessor of that idol of a keen numismatist—an unique coin.

There are some objects of considerable psychological and artistic interest in the private keeping of the director of the Uffizi, which he will show visitors provided with proper introductions. But, as they are for the most part of a nature which forbids that they should be exposed to public view, it will be understood that visitors in this case must be gentlemen. The objects were collected by the Medici, who, provided that they were remarkable for their artistic excellence, were not very particular respecting their nature or signification.

Thanks to the liberality of the proprietors of the private picture-galleries in Florence, they are now so well known that it is quite unnecessary to say anything of them here; a few remarks respecting the artists' studios will be more in keeping with this work.

Giving the precedence to sculpture, let us look in at the studios of the leading artists. And we will first call on Powers. We found him working on an extremely beautiful figure of Clytia, with a sunflower on her forehead—emblematic of her fate, in consequence of her jealousy of Leucothea. The face was so lovely, that I felt curious to know what country had furnished the model. 'Many,' was

the reply; 'for, like the bee, extracting sweets from several flowers, I cull beauty from many faces; and here you see is the result. It was a face, lifeless indeed, but wonderfully lifelike, and—

> so lovely, that if mirth could flush
> Its rose of whiteness with the brightest blush,
> Your heart would wish away that ruder glow.

Struck by the red colour of the modelling clay, Mr. Powers informed me that all the clay he uses for modelling is imported from Alabama, United States. It is, in his opinion, superior to any clay that can be procured in Europe, possessing, among other advantages, that of remaining a long time moist.

Among recent works in Mr. Power's studio, is a statue of Mr. Everett, severe in attitude, but, as I can vouch from personal acquaintance with that late statesman, an excellent likeness. It will be sent to America. There was also a statue of 'America Redeemed,' exemplified by a woman trampling on broken chains, her left arm resting on a bundle of unbroken fasces. Another statue, named California, represents a beautiful woman pointing to nuggets of gold, with a divining rod held in the right hand, while the left, behind her back, grasps a bunch of thorns, typical of the evils accompanying the discovery of this precious metal. As a matter of course, a replica of the

famous Greek Slave occupies a commanding position in Mr. Power's studio. Several replicas of this statue have been executed, and others were in progress, few modern sculptures being more in favour than this charming statue.

Although the Florentines are very proud of Dupré's bas-reliefs in a conspicuous part of the new *façade* of Santa Croce, I do not think that these are by any means the finest productions of this very clever sculptor. Better works may be seen in his studio. Among these may be cited his monument of Catalani, intended for Pisa, the bas-reliefs for Cavour's monument at Ancona, representing the meeting of a congress at Paris, and the assembling of the first Italian Parliament at Turin; two figures of Bacchus, one representing the god, fat and jolly, rejoicing over a prolific vintage, the other, attenuated and melancholy, in consequence of the ravages of the vine disease, the accessories in both cases being in keeping with the subjects. A colossal statue of Menander, and a lovely Pieta for Siena, are especially to be commended.

When we had gone round his studio, M. Dupré conducted us to an inner room, and introduced us to his youthful daughter, who inherits a large share of her father's artistic talent. She was at work on bas-

reliefs, representing mourning figures, the execution of which was most admirable. With such promise, and under so able a master as her father, it is highly probable that this young lady will, ere long, attain more than local reputation.

We next visited Signor Fedi's studio, which was almost entirely filled by his colossal group of the Rape of Polyxena. Though some portions of this vast work are undoubtedly heavy, the general effect of the group is good. The hapless maiden is represented before an altar of Jupiter, on the point of being sacrificed on the tomb of Achilles, whilst Hecuba intercedes, and the youthful son of Priam lies dead at the feet of Pyrrhus.

This group possesses additional interest to the Florentine visitor, because it is now placedin the Loggia dell' Orcagna immediately behind Cellini's grand statue of Perseus.

How far this bellicose artist who, as you will remember, was ever ready to resent even the slightest injury, by deliberately slaying his real or supposed enemy, would approve of such a background to his statue, were he in the flesh, we cannot say, but when we read that he was of opinion that Michael Angelo alone could have produced a statue superior to his Perseus, we may reasonably assume that he would

not be gratified by the far from judicious disposition of Fedi's great group. Another group by this sculptor, emblematic of Tuscan civilisation, represents a graceful woman, attended by a winged genius, crowned by a wreath of oak leaves; her left hand grasps a lyre, while, with the right, she records with a stylus the date of the last Grand Duke's flight from Florence, and the numbers who voted for the annexation of Tuscany to the kingdom of Italy. This group has been presented to Florence by Prince Carignano.

High in the list of sculptors now residing in Florence, is our countryman Mr. Fuller, who having sheathed his soldier's sword for life, now wields the chisel. His works are extremely beautiful, abounding in grace and sentiment. A group on which he was engaged last winter is full of promise. It represents Glaucus, led by Nydia, carrying Ione from Pompeii to the seashore. All visitors to Florence should make a point of seeing this excellent group, which, it is to be hoped, will be rendered in marble.

If Signor Fantacchiotti be not one of the first sculptors in Florence, he is certainly one of the most prolific; but his works are extremely able, and well worth inspecting. His monument to Cavour, intended for erection in Santa Croce, is remarkable for vigour and a happy realisation of the object to be carried out.

The municipality of Florence, with great propriety, purpose honouring the memory of Goldoni with a statue. The execution has been entrusted to Cambi, favourably known by the Magdalene, on the *façade* of Santa Croce. He has executed an admirable colossal statue of that dramatic author, representing him in the costume of his period, which it is to be wished were less like a livery. Among several excellent works in Signor Cambi's studio, a group entitled 'Amor Mendicante' is remarkable for its beauty. It will be sent to the Paris Exhibition.

Turning to the painters, Professors Pallastrini and Ussi rank high as historical artists. Rapisardi is deservedly celebrated for the excellence of his portraits, and Marko, Signorini, and Chiavacci are good landscape painters. Copyists of course abound. Among the best are the above, Signor Chiavacci, inspector of the Pitti Gallery—who is also an excellent master—Berti, and A. S. Fallardeau, a Canadian gentleman, and proprietor of the vast Palazzo Machiavelli, containing one hundred and sixty-seven rooms, which he has admirably restored.*

But had a proper spirit of gallantry moved me, I should have cried, 'Place aux dames!' and at the

* This palace (5 Fondaccio de San Spirito) is well worth visiting. By M. Fallardeau's kindness, it may be seen daily.

head of the painters placed Mrs. Hay, already favourably known in London by some works that she has executed, and who is, in all probability, destined to enjoy a high reputation for a picture on which she has been long engaged.

This, which is of great size, represents the collection of artistic and other objects during the carnival at Florence, when Savonarola preached a crusade against worldly vanities. The painting represents a procession passing under an awning; the base of Giotto's glorious campanile and a part of the Duomo being in the background. The prominent figure in the procession is Fra Domenico, Savonarola's chief auxiliary. He is accompanied by a young painter, who carry between them a gorgeous banner representing the infant Christ as head of the Florentine republic at the period to which the painting applies. Preceding Fra Domenico are girls playing on musical instruments, and boys carrying statues, rich brocades, gold lace, books, and jewels, that they have collected. Other boys are accosting Florentine ladies dressed in the most fashionable garments of the time, radiant with brilliant colours, and demanding their jewels and other ornaments as contributions to the collections of 'vanities.' Near the ladies are a group of campagnaccios, or roysterers, intensely amused by the

proceedings, which they are evidently turning into ridicule. Besides these figures, are numerous citizens and various accessories. All the dresses and ornaments have been accurately copied from authentic sources.

Bearing in mind that the subject of this picture is intimately connected with Savonarola, who so largely fills the history of the period in which he lived, and there being, moreover, an authentic likeness of that stern monk in existence, it is to be regretted that the artist has not made him the leading figure in this most interesting picture. Mrs. Hay's reason for having omitted him is, that she cannot find any reliable record of his ever having walked in these famous processions. Thus, though we may regret the absence of the sturdy reformer, the picture is probably more historically truthful as we now see it. That the canvas abounds in interest is most certain, and ranking high as a work of art, it will undoubtedly enjoy extensive popularity.

A picture by Luigi Mussini of Siena deserves mention, because it attracted considerable notice in Florence last winter, when it was exhibited in the rooms of the Accademia delle Belle Arti. It represents Victor Emmanuel in the act of receiving the famous sword of Castruccio, often carried in battle

by that hero, and which was presented to the King at Pistoia. The weapon bears the following inscription :—

QUESTA SPADA DI CASTRUCCIO
VERGOGNOSA DEL SANGUE FRATERNO
HA CHIESTO UN ASILO IN QUESTA VILLA
CHE CONSERVA TANTI MONUMENTI
DI GLORIA ITALIANA
SPERANDO CHE UN GIORNO IDDIO
LA FARÀ IMPUGNARE DA UN VALOROSO
MA A SALUTE DI TUTTA ITALIA
COME CINQUE SECOLI SONO BALENÒ VITTORIOSA
A FARLA PARTITA E INFELICE.

To which the loyal Pistoiese added this address :—

Per la fede e prodezza Vostra, o magnanimo Sire, queste parole più non sono un presagio! In Voi l' Italia riconoscente ringrazia, onora ed ammira il suo Liberatore: in Voi, colla speranza di tanti Popoli, quella pure è compiuta del pistojese Patrizio. Questa Spada alla Maestà Vostra appartiene: e gli Eredi di Niccolò Puccini, ponendóla nelle Vostre mani invitte, sono ben lieti di poter oggi, nella comune esultanza dei Popoli da Voi felicitati, sciogliere il voto del loro benefattore.

It is stated that Victor Emmanuel was greatly moved, both by the inscription and address, and that when the sword was presented to him he remained absorbed in thought for some moments, and then exclaimed as he grasped it, 'Questa è per me!' And though we do not hear that he carried it into battle,

it is evident that Castruccio's warrior spirit has fallen on him.

The subject is finer than the painter's execution, Signor Mussini having made the King more like a ranting actor than a monarch conscious of the dignity of the occasion, and full of patriotic zeal for his much-loved country.

Before closing this chapter, I must introduce you to Signor Agnerni, one of the most experienced and skilful fresco-painters in Europe, as well as a charming artist. He has executed several works for our Queen and nobility. The frescoes in the new Palazzo Ristori are by him, and he was engaged last winter and spring in decorating the Villa Corsi-Salviati at Sesto, near Florence. Signor Agnerni, who is a Roman, has spent a large portion of his artistic life in studying the composition of ancient frescoes, and the arts employed by their painters. He assured me that there is only one particular shade of violet used in the old frescoes which remains a secret, the composition of all other colours being known.

In the course of my visit to the various artists' studios in Florence, I was greatly struck by the small amount of patronage extended to them, compared to that enjoyed by the artists in Rome. Probably, however, this was in a great measure due to the

sudden rise of prices in Florence, which deterred many visitors from purchasing pictures or statues. From this and other causes, there was considerable suffering among artists last winter in Florence. And falling off in patronage is the more felt in that city, because, as will be seen by the following figures, Government does very little at present to support or advance art.

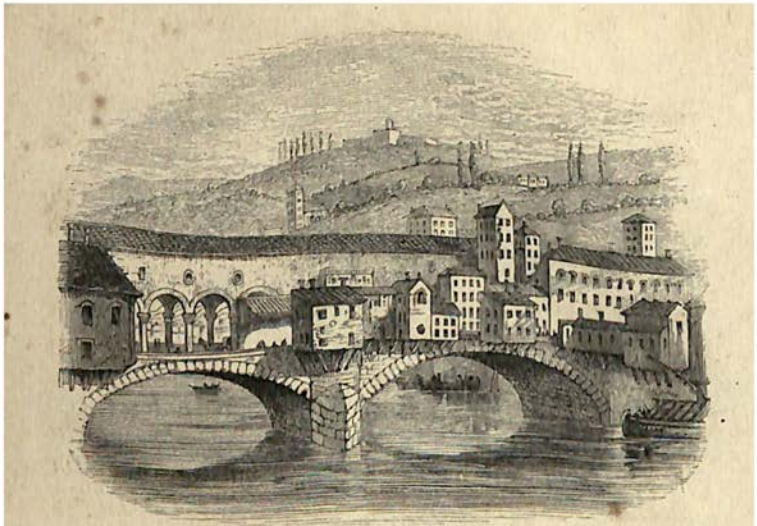
The subvention this year for the schools of painting, sculpture, and architecture, in Florence, was 46,563 francs; for the school of engraving, 2,428 francs, and for that of music, 79,178 francs. A few pensions are given to poor students of promise, which, however, only amount to the miserable pittance of 30 francs a month.

While on the subject of art and its connection with Government, I may take this opportunity of stating, that the Minister of Public Instruction has lately addressed an important circular to the authorities throughout the kingdom of Italy who are entrusted with the care of the national monuments. The document contains a clause affecting, to some extent, English museums and artists. It is to the effect that a foreign institution, having demanded permission from the authorities to take casts of Ghiberti's famous basso-relievos of the great gates of the

Baptistery of St. John, at Florence, the Government not being certain that the gates in question would not suffer injury from the modelling necessary to take the casts, had the work suspended, in order to ascertain whether the basso-relievos would be injured by the operation. With this view, a commission, so constituted that art and science should be efficiently represented, was appointed, in order that an authoritative opinion might be arrived at, which should serve as a rule for all that concerns the reproduction of bronzes by means of casts.

Having made minute investigations, the commissioners came to the conclusion that casts cannot be taken of works in bronze with plaster or other substances without seriously injuring the originals, and the authorities have accordingly given instructions that permission to perform such operations must, for the future, be invariably and rigorously refused.

With respect to Ghiberti's gates of the Baptistery, which seem to have led to the promulgation of the foregoing order, it was stated last winter that the municipal Government proposed removing them to the large hall in the Bargello, where it is considered they would be better preserved than in their present position, and be at the same time seen to greater advantage.



Ponte Vecchio.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Passage between the Pitti Palace and the Palazzo Vecchio—Constructed by Vasari—Its former Purposes—Intrigues—Violante Martelli—Nature of the Passage—Numerous Windows—Curious old Pictures—Portraits of the Medici—Paintings in Distemper—Festivities under the Medici—Carnival Songs—Canzoni a Ballo—Lorenzo de' Medici's Poetical Compositions—Dancing Exhibitions—Religious Exhibition on the Ponte alla Carraia—Fearful Catastrophe—Proposition to destroy the Ponte Vecchio—Victor Emmanuel's Order respecting it—A new Public Exhibition in Florence—Drawings by old Masters—Curious Tapestry.

ALL who know Florence well, will remember the covered passage connecting the Pitti Palace with the Palazzo Vecchio. Starting from the top of the

second flight of stairs leading to the famous gallery of pictures in the Royal Palace, the passage runs over and under roofs, one of which covers a church, above the quaint little jewellers' shops on Ponte Vecchio, into the Uffizi Gallery, and out of this again, in the form of a lofty archway, into the celebrated Palazzo Vecchio. Its curious exterior architectural features are familiar to visitors, but few have seen the interior of this gallery. It was constructed by Vasari for the convenience of Cosimo I., to enable him to pass at all times without interruption between the Palazzo Vecchio and the Pitti Palace. Vasari was very proud of this work, but even more so of the short time occupied in completing it. It was finished in five months; whereas, says Vasari, 'anyone who looks at its great length would suppose that it must have taken as many years.'

Long closed to the public, it has remained until recently as a kind of secret service establishment, into the mysteries of which few persons have been allowed to penetrate. But the Medici have long departed; and though Florence may not remain the capital of Italy, it is quite certain that she will never more be ruled by a Grand Duke, who might be disposed to turn the screw of power a little too

tightly, and making the pleasant Palazzo Pitti somewhat dangerous as a residence, be glad to use this passage as a means of escape. And as for jolly Victor Emmanuel, about the last thing to enter into the head of one of his Florence subjects is the notion that His Majesty would ever commit an act to render him anxious to retain exclusive mastery over the long and labyrinthine passage in question, regarding it as a means of escape. For other purposes, were the Pitti Palace not so vast as it is—abounding withal in *escaliers dérobés*, quaint rooms in out-of-the-way places, and still more quaint and curious closets—all of which seem to have been constructed for purposes closely allied to intrigue—it might be said that His Majesty of Italy would perhaps be loth to relinquish his royal right over the passage in question. For Victor Emmanuel, as is well known, is no Joseph: but though this gallery has many *œils-de-bœuf*, you would look in vain through them for a Maintenon or a Pompadour. But it has witnessed many scenes of love, and was the favourite trysting place of the Cardinal son of Cosimo I. and of Violante Martelli, niece of the wife of the latter.

Though closed, as a rule, to the public, the passage has been accessible under certain conditions. But barred by two doors, one royal, the other municipal,

it has been necessary to obtain permission from the Chamberlain of the Royal Palace, as well as from the Syndic, to pass through the gallery. The right of way was equally divided between these authorities, a door being placed midway in the gallery between the Royal Palace and the Palazzo Vecchio.

From the outer aspect of the passage, you would expect to find it gloomy if not absolutely dark, festooned by cobwebs, and venerable by the undisturbed dust of years. But not so. Lighted by ninety-five windows—I had the curiosity to count them—the gallery is in no place even dusky, and is moreover extremely clean and fresh-looking. Throughout its great length, excepting that portion near the Uffizi, it was hung with pictures, at the time of my visit; more remarkable, however, for their subjects, than for their artistic excellence. They amounted to many hundreds, and comprised portraits of the Medici, and other Florentine and Italian notabilities, and a long and extremely curious series, painted in distemper, representing scenes in connection with the great city festivities, which took place during many successive years, when the Medici were omnipotent in the fair Tuscan city. These spectacles were often got up at enormous cost, frequently with the view of reconciling the Florentines to the yoke under which

they lived; their rulers hoping that if they could only amuse the people, they would, in some measure at least, forget their political sufferings and wrongs.

Originally introduced by Lorenzo the Magnificent, when they united the charms of poetry with the most striking pictorial representations, they were eventually made to serve political purposes, and thus many of the pictures possess historical interest.

The greatest festivities seem to have taken place on the 24th June, the anniversary festival of St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of Florence, when no expense appears to have been spared to render the spectacle as imposing as possible. The pictures contain multitudes of figures, devices, masques, ornaments, &c. used on these occasions, and the locality selected was generally the banks of the Arno, near the Ponte San Trinità, and occasionally the Arno itself.

The festival of 1514 was of surpassing magnificence, for it commemorated the return of the Medici to Florence; and so great were the attractions, that many cardinals at Rome requested permission from the Pope to be present at the rejoicings. We are told that the preparation of the complicated apparatus, machinery, dresses, cars, standards, emblems, &c. many of which are represented in the pictures,

was entrusted to Francesco Grannaci, a fellow-pupil of Michael Angelo, who enjoyed a high reputation for his inventive and artistic powers.

To Lorenzo de' Medici belongs the merit of making these exhibitions extremely magnificent, and illustrating them by poetical compositions, frequently written by himself. The *Canti Carnascialeschi*, or Carnival Songs, are examples of this nature. They are remarkable for the extreme purity of the Florentine diction, which is preserved free from adulteration; so pure, indeed, that the Della Crusca Academy cite these pieces in their celebrated dictionary as authorities for the Italian language.

In connection with these spectacles, troops of dancing girls frequently went through the streets singing *Canzoni a Ballo*, in concert with the music to which they danced; and although many of their songs are certainly far from moral, it appears that the great Lorenzo not unfrequently participated in this amusement, acting even as director of the evolutions of the dancing girls. He also composed a dancing song, of which, as an illustration of the ancient pure Florentine language, here are a couple of stanzas:—

Ben venga maggio
E' l ganfalon selvaggio,
Ben venga Primavera
Ch' ognun par che inamori,

E voi donzelle a schiera,
Con li vostri amadori.
Con di rose, e di fiore,
Vi fate belle il maggio.

Venite alla frescura
Delli verdi arbuscelli
Ogni bella è sicura
Fra tanti damigelli;
Che le fiere, e gl' uccelli
Ardon d' amor il maggio.
Ciascuna balli e canti
Di questa schiera nostra,
Ecco è dodici amanti
Che per voi vanno in giostra
Qual dura allor si mostra
Farà sfiorire il maggio.

And as a proof how warmly Lorenzo patronised these dancing exhibitions, we may state, that in the curious edition of the *Canzoni a Ballo*, published at Florence in 1568, the title-page is ornamented with a wood engraving, representing twelve girls dancing before the palace of the Medici, and singing songs. In the foreground of the picture is a representation of Lorenzo, with two girls gaily attired kneeling before him, one of whom presents him with a garland of flowers.

Large companies of artisans were also in the habit of devoting much time to these festivities. Villani tells us, that on St. John's day in 1333, no less than

one thousand operatives, one half dressed in yellow garments, the other in white, promenaded the streets daily, carrying flags and flowers, for an entire month, during which time labour was entirely suspended. Whether this mumming may be considered as evidence of the great commercial prosperity of Florence at that period, or of the silliness of her citizens, is questionable. This, however, is certain, that operatives at the present day could not afford to do such holidaying as this.

But we have evidence, from the pictures and other authorities, that these spectacles were not unfrequently made use of for religious purposes, sometimes with fatal effect. The most disastrous instance was that when certain persons, desirous of entertaining the Cardinal Nicolò da Prato, and at the same time amending the morals of Florence, informed the citizens, that on an appointed day there would be an exhibition of the torments destined for those condemned to eternal hell-fire, on the Arno, near the Ponte alla Carraia, to which all citizens were invited.

The invitation was eagerly accepted. At the appointed time, thousands of the inhabitants of Florence assembled on the bridge, curious to see the simulated tortures of the damned. These appeared on rafts on the Arno, dressed in robes representing

flames, undergoing every kind of horrible torment that the most cruel members of the Holy Inquisition ever invented. Demons, of all conceivable forms, were busy with instruments of torture among the poor wretches, whose cries of anguish were partly drowned by discordant sounds, which might well be supposed to proceed from Pandemonium.

The greatest excitement now prevailed among the spectators, in the midst of which, just as the torments of the damned had culminated to extreme agony, the Ponte alla Carraia, which was at that period constructed of wood, gave way, causing hundreds of unfortunate citizens to become chief actors in the drama.*

Besides the pictures to which we have alluded, there were several battle-pieces in the gallery, portraits of famous warriors and statesmen, and marble busts of eminent individuals. Over the middle of the Ponte Vecchio, and on the western side, the walls of the gallery give place to boards, removable at pleasure. Here the Ducal Court assembled to see the illuminations and fireworks on the banks of the Arno, and here, we trust, many a king of Italy to come, and his court, will meet for the same purpose.

* This catastrophe, it is stated, inspired Dante to write his immortal work.

Alternating with the pictures, were various pieces of tapestry, for the most part, in excellent preservation, and of great interest. Adjoining the Uffizi, the passage was occupied by numerous Etruscan objects, outpourings from the rooms of the Uffizi, which have long been unable to accommodate advantageously the treasures of that collection.

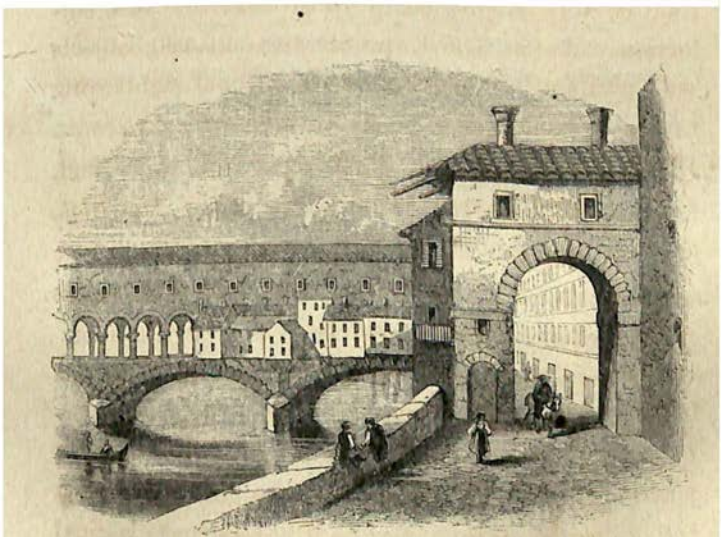
With these particulars respecting this passage and its contents—and they might be amplified—it will scarcely be believed that some persons strongly advocated not only the destruction of this gallery, but also that of the Ponte Vecchio, with its quaint shops, which have furnished half the Florentine mosaic ornaments brought to England by visitors to that city. The proposition was, however, vetoed by the first authority in the kingdom; Victor Emmanuel having emphatically declared, that on no account whatever should the Ponte Vecchio be destroyed. Fortunately, the bridge, with its shops, is out of the region of the Florence Public Works Company's operations, otherwise, even royalty itself might be weak before British capital, and the so-called spirit of improvement.

But the public have to thank the King of Italy for even more than his determination to preserve this interesting old bridge in his new capital. Conjointly

with the municipality of Florence, he has given permission that the gallery shall be thrown open to visitors, and appropriated for the exhibition of such pictures and other objects of art as can be seen to the best advantage. Accordingly, the passage is now filled with a collection of pictures and tapestry, and, what is even more interesting, with drawings by the old masters, that have been long preserved in the Uffizi, but which, for want of space, have not hitherto been exhibited. Visitors who, pressed for time, may have groaned in spirit over the vast collections of the Uffizi, numbering 29,400 objects will, perhaps, rejoice that this additional sightseeing tax was not imposed on them when they were in Florence. But, among the treasures in the Uffizi, few are of greater interest than these drawings. Many are coloured, and the manner in which they are exposed to view, enabling you to see them to great advantage, adds considerably to their interest.

Arrived within the Uffizi, the visitor will take his leave of this celebrated passage; it not being contemplated to allow the public to re-enter the gallery where it leaves the Uffizi and communicates with the Palazzo Vecchio. For, as it enters that classical building, within a short distance of the celebrated Cinque Cento Hall, where the Italian Parliament

now meet, however pleasant it might be to the deputies to see bright English faces within their vast hall, it would not, in all probability, be conducive to sound legislation; though even the pink parasols and clustering ringlets, that astounded the spirit of old Cheops at the pyramids, would not, in all probability, be productive of any great mischief to the great talking house of Florence.



Covered Gallery over Ponte Vecchio.

CHAPTER XV.

Mendelssohn's Observations on Italian Music—The Pagliano Theatre—Adelina Patti in Florence—How she nearly came to Grief—Bouquet-throwing—Present to her from Queen of Portugal—A Venetian Ballerina—Patti's Family—The Opera in Florence—Great number of New Operas—Rossini's Operas—Ballets in Florence—Pretty Dancers—Concerts—Musical Institution—Accademia del Buon Umóre—Collection of Violins—Tourte's Bows—Paganini's Wooden-shoe Fiddle—Società del Quartetto—Società Sbolci—Cherubini Society—Monument to Cherubini in Santa Croce—Operetta entitled Newmarket Races—Singing in Florence—Guido Aretino—How Singing was Taught formerly in Italy—Price of Music Lessons in Florence—Church Music in Florence—Military Music—Theatres in Florence—Amateur Theatre at Fiesole—Grisi and Mario—Etruscan Temple.

'If I desire to hear Italian music,' says Mendelssohn in his 'Letters on Italy,' 'I must go to London or Paris.' The maestro, of course, meant by this such music as would give him pleasure; for there is no lack of operatic music in Florence, the drawback being, that it is of a very mediocre nature. 'Mais que voulez vous,' as a Parisian who lived in Florence, said to me. 'Give the Patti a larger honorarium than she receives in London, and she will

doubtless be willing to sing at the Pergola.' But the director of this opera-house can do nothing of the kind, and so she is only rarely heard in Florence. The fact is, there are now so many theatres in Europe and America requiring eminent artists, and the remuneration they receive is so large, that Florence has no chance, at present, of competing with wealthy capitals. Thus, while Italy continues to furnish many singers, Paris, as Balzac pertinently observes, 'les juge, et Londres les paye.' But Florence is not always without a star in her musical firmament. The director of the vast Pagliano theatre —built by the quack doctor of that name, and capable of accommodating five thousand persons—contracted an engagement with Mademoiselle Adelina Patti, to sing in that house for ten nights last winter, for the consideration of 160*l.* a night. On each occasion the theatre was crammed, although the ordinary price of admission, which is three francs, was trebled.* But the *prima donna* was very near coming to grief. They have a custom in Florence of throwing enormous bouquets to their favourites on the stage; and so prodigious often are these floral offerings, that, if one descending from a box on the third or second

* At the theatres in Florence, all visitors pay an entrance-fee, irrespective of the hire of boxes or stalls.

tier, should hit a fragile-formed lady on the head, the chances are that she would be knocked down, and perhaps seriously injured. And that Patti escaped such a result, was assuredly more due to chance than discretion on the part of those who were bent on giving her a most enthusiastic reception.* But this, one night, assumed a more enduring form than that of flowers. At one of Patti's representations, the King desired her presence in the royal box; and, having received high praise from His Majesty, his daughter, the Queen of Portugal, presented Adelina with a very handsome chain, and a medal-

* I have seen bouquets which have been presented to ladies in Florence—or rather carried to them by servants—nearly a yard in diameter.

This custom of bouquet-throwing was ingeniously taken advantage of by the Venetians to testify their political proclivities. A favourite ballerina at Venice, while dancing in a theatre in that city, shortly before the war broke out, had a bouquet thrown her, tied with a ribbon of the Italian colours. She immediately kissed the ribbon, which created tremendous enthusiasm among the audience. After the performance, she was summoned to the dreaded police-office, and sharply reprimanded for this act of patriotism. She excused herself by saying that, in kissing the bouquet, she had only followed the universal custom on such occasions. But the authorities would not accept this excuse, and told her that another time she should not kiss the bouquet, but tread it under foot. The following evening, another bouquet was thrown; and the ballerina, in compliance with these orders, trod it under her feet, amid frantic applause. The ribbon round the bouquet was, however, this time not red, green, and white, but black and yellow—the colours of Austria.

lion set with jewels. As a matter of course, the newspaper criticisms on the singer were of the most flattering nature. In one journal, the laudatory writer described her voice in Dante's words:—

. . . . Com' aqua recepe
Raggio di luce, permanendo unita.

It is rather curious that the director of the Pagliano, to whom the Florentines were indebted last winter for hearing Patti, should be the son of the director of the Apollo opera-house at Rome, who made that city acquainted with Patti's parents in 1837. These were Salvatore and Barili Patti. They had six children, of whom four are living: Carlo Patti, a violinist, born at Lisbon; Madame Strakosch, born at Pesaro; Carlotta, born at Florence; and Adelina, born at Madrid.

But the advent of the latter was a golden period in the musical world of Florence. Exit Patti, enter very mediocre singers, who, with one or two exceptions, would, it is to be apprehended, be very harshly judged in Paris, and most assuredly not receive any of that metal with which many persons, and especially foreign artists, believe the streets of London to be paved.

You might suppose that, as the Pergola is the Court theatre, and receives a subvention of 4,000*l.* a

year, the performances would be better than they are; but it must be borne in mind that the price of admission is only three francs; an enormous sum, it is true, in the estimation of the old Florentine, who probably regretfully remembers the days when he heard as good music for three pauls, or one shilling and threepence; but to Londoners, accustomed to the large prices at our great opera-houses, a small charge for an operatic performance.

Operas are also given at the Nazionale and Borgognissanti theatres. At the former you may occasionally hear good buffo operas; but, seeing that the price of a pit ticket is only fivepence, and that of a stall two francs, it would be unreasonable to allow expectation to run high. All through the opera, the buzz of conversation is audible in the Pergola; the custom being general for ladies to receive their gentlemen friends in the boxes. When a new opera is produced, curiosity respecting its merits lulls the house to silence for a short time; but as these works are generally only new in name, being sadly wanting in originality, the audience quickly relapses into their customary talking habit; declaring generally, with much truth, that the new opera is not worth listening to.

Italians may find fault, and with reason, of the

dearth of good music; but they cannot complain of the want of so-called new operas. It will scarcely be credited that, to satisfy the constant desire for novelty, during the last two opera seasons in Italy, no less than forty-five new operas have been produced; not one of which, however, seems to have been sufficiently meritorious to enable it to enjoy more than a most ephemeral existence. In this craving for novelty, though at the expense of bearing the infliction of indifferent music, modern Italians are very like those of the preceding generation, as will be seen by the following observations by Matthews, who visited Italy in 1817:—

'It ought to excite little wonder that there are so few good singers in Italy; for she is unable, from her poverty, to retain those whom she has herself formed. As soon as they become eminent, they are enticed away to foreign countries; and often return to Italy, after years of absence, enriched with the spoils of half the provinces of Europe. Besides, the Italians of the present day have no taste for the higher kinds of music—for full or grand harmonies, or for instrumental music in general. If you talk to them of Hadyn, Mozart, or Beethoven, they shrug up their shoulders, and tell you "È musica tedesca; non ci abbiamo gusto." Cherubini, their only

really great composer, might perhaps be cited as an exception; but he is, in fact, a most striking confirmation of their want of taste; for his works are almost unknown, and he seems to be himself aware of the inability of his countrymen to appreciate his merits, by residing at a distance, and composing for foreign theatres. What the Italians like, is an easy flowing melody, unencumbered, as they would call it, with too much harmony. Whatever Corinne may say to the contrary, they seem to have little or no relish for impassioned music. Take an example of the times from the opera of to-night—*Armida*—the composition of their favourite Rossini. His operas are always easy and flowing, abounding in prettinesses and melting cadences; but he never reaches, nor apparently does he attempt to reach, the sustained and elevated character which distinguishes the music of Mozart. But Rossini's works ought not to be too severely criticised; for the continual demand for new music is greater than any fertility of head could supply. The Italians never like to go back—without referring so far as their own great Corelli—Cimarosa,* Paisiello, and others

* Mr. Matthews might have added, with respect to Cimarosa, not only antiquated, but unappreciated. His *Matrimonio Segreto*—which obtained the honour at Vienna of being encored, being repeated the

of equally recent date, are already become antiquated; and, as Rossini is almost their only composer, he is obliged to write an opera in the interval of a few weeks, between the bringing out of the last and its being laid on the shelf.'

Mr. Matthews' criticism on Rossini is not quite fair, nor can we find fault with the Italians for thinking very highly of the author of *Il Barbiere*; so highly that, as you may remember, the Bolognese built a house for the maestro in their fine old city, and covered the *façade* with laudatory inscriptions, which still remain, including—

Non dominus domo,
Sed domus domino.

But where are all these operas of Rossini, produced at intervals of a few weeks? It would be interesting to hear some of them.

Opera being very much a stumbling-block to the directors of the opera-houses in Florence, we cannot wonder that they should devote their resources to the ballet; and the more so, as this is, as we have seen, warmly patronised by Royalty. Pretty and graceful danseuses are far more abundant than

same evening—was barely tolerated at Florence, and actually hissed off the stage at Leghorn in 1834, although Lablache sustained one of the leading parts.

excellent singers; and as the orchestras at the Pergola and Pagliano are, if not of first-rate excellence, at all events highly effective in the performance of dance-music, the dancing good,* the scenery fair, and the dresses quite as fresh and handsome as are to be seen in Paris,—the result is generally a first-rate ballet, which is the attraction of the evening, and is always interpolated between the penultimate and last acts of the opera.

The opera being indifferent, you will be prepared to hear that the public concerts are not first-rate. Attempts are being made by Government to create a taste for music among the middle classes, by the establishment of a musical institution, which is under royal patronage. The Government grant the institution the use of a building, and about 150*l.* a year, to meet the incidental expenses of giving gratuitous concerts. Those who are curious in violins, may be interested to know that this establishment possesses an extremely valuable collection of these instruments, made by Amati and other famous makers, and of Toarte bows;† and also other

* There was formerly a society in Florence established to promote dancing. The institution, which flourished in the days of academies with quaint names, was entitled Accademia del Buon Umóre.

† This Toarte discovered a method of preparing logwood for

instruments, some of which, like Paganini's famous wooden-shoe fiddle, could only claim very remote relationship to the family of violins.

The Società del Quartetta, the Società Sbolci, and the Cherubini Society, give good chamber concerts. The latter is composed of amateurs, who are endeavouring to collect a fund by their performances to defray the expense of a monument to Cherubini, which it is proposed to erect in Santa Croce. The Cherubini Society is also very desirous to make the Florentines acquainted with this master's music —Cherubini, though a Florentine, being still but little known to them.*

This indifference to good music is the more remarkable, if it be true, as historians allege, that music found a home in Florence at an earlier date than in any other city in Europe. The first opera, as we have stated, was performed here; and Dante,

violin bows in such a manner as to combine elasticity with durability. The bows by this maker are held in such high esteem, that as much as 10*l.* has been paid for one.

* Cherubini was born at Florence on the 8th September 1760. Leopold II., Grand Duke of Tuscany, granted him a pension, to enable him to study music under Sarti at Bologna. Though known principally for his sacred music, he composed several operas and operettas, among the latter, one entitled *Newmarket Races*! If the director of the Royal Italian Opera, or of Her Majesty's Theatre, were to announce this for the Derby week, the result would assuredly be a crowded house.

it will be remembered, speaks of the organ and lute as extremely common in Florence in his day. Local chronicles also state that, during the sway of Lorenzo de' Medici, the streets were constantly vocal with the songs of hundreds of amateurs; who, we are told, sang very sweetly and with great precision. But, even as late as 1823, according to Lady Blessington, the streets of Florence resounded at night, with music. 'We hear,' she says, 'the sounds of guitars continually passing and repassing the Lung' Arno; for the working classes, who have been pent up during the day, stroll forth with a companion or two to serenade some humble beauty, or for the mere pleasure of hearing their own music in the fresh air of these balmy nights.'*

Nor, when looking back on the history of music in connection with Florence, should we forget that Guido Aretino, the monk of Vallombrosa, near that city, was the inventor of the scale or gamme, in the first half of the eleventh century. Having observed, we are told in his life, that the music then in use to the following hymn to John the Baptist, by Paulus Diaconus, ascended upon the first syllable of each half line in an uninterrupted series of

* *Idler in Italy*, vol. ii.

six sounds, he adapted these six syllables to represent the six sounds:- -

Ut queant laxis *re*sonare fibris
*Mi*ra gestorum *fa*muli tuorum,
*Sol*ve polluti *la*bii reatum,*
Sancte Johannes!

Cosmo III., who travelled in England, records, in the account of his travels preserved in the Laurenziano Library, that the music he heard in England and France was far inferior to that of Florence; and Rousseau, at a much later period, used to say that he always wished to be blind at the Italian, and deaf at the French opera. And it is to Florence we are indebted for pianos, the first pianoforte having been made in that city in 1718, by Christofero.

The pains that were taken in Italy to cultivate singing, were very great, as will be seen by the following curious passage translated from Angelini's 'Storia della Musica.'

The pupils, the majority of whom came from Florence, were obliged, while undergoing instruction at the Conservatorio in Rome, to sing daily for an hour difficult pieces of music, in order that they might acquire this habit. One hour was also

* *Do* was substituted for *Ut*, and *Si* added in the seventeenth century.

devoted daily to trills, one hour to cadences, one hour to the history of music, and another hour to singing exercises; always in the presence of a professor of singing, and in front of a mirror, in order that the pupils might acquire the very important habit of singing without making disagreeable grimaces or ungraceful motions of the body. All this took place in the morning. In the afternoon, half an hour was devoted to the theory of music, half an hour to counterpoint, and another half hour to the history of music. The rest of the day was spent in exercises on the harpsichord, composition of motets, or other musical pieces.

Such was the daily routine when the pupils did not leave the house. On those days that they went out, they usually walked beyond the Porta Angelica in the direction of Monte Mario, near which there is a very remarkable echo. The pupils were required to rouse this echo, in order that they might exercise their voices, and at the same time judge personally of their vocal powers. On Sundays and saints' days they sang at the principal churches, taking such parts as they were fitted for. On their return home, they conversed with the professors on the style of the masses that they had been singing, and other subjects connected with music.

It must be admitted that this discipline was

pretty severe, if not, indeed, excessive. There is no doubt, however, that the result was the formation of a school of excellent singers, far more numerous than any that Italy can now boast of. But still, although musical performances are not of first-rate excellence in Florence, admirable musical instruction is obtainable there, as well as in Rome; and at far less cost than in London or Paris. A singing-lesson, by masters of great ability and experience, can be had in Florence for ten francs; one on the piano, for from four to six francs; and lessons by masters on other instruments, for even less. Low charges these, but high in comparison to those demanded at the beginning of this century. Beckford, in his 'Letters from Italy,' tells us, that in 1813 an Englishman, who was in the habit of passing the winter in Florence, being desirous of receiving instruction on the violin from the famous Nardini, Paganini's master, was regarded as little short of mad, because he agreed to pay the professor twenty crowns a month (equal to 4*l.* 3*s.*), there being no instance of the violinist ever having received more than three crowns, or twelve shillings and ninepence.

Bearing in mind how admirably adapted the churches of Florence are for sacred music, it is mortifying to find that this most important branch

of religious worship is greatly neglected in the new Italian capital. But when we consider that the machinery of the Roman Catholic Church in Italy is at present in a most disorgansied condition, and ecclesiastical finances are by no means flourishing, we cannot be surprised that good musical services should be rare. Indeed, it is only at the Annunziata on high church days that you will hear any of the magnificent masses for which the Roman Catholic Church is deservedly celebrated, well performed.

Nor are the organs in the Florence churches at all remarkable. The best is in Santa Maria Novella; but the tones of this instrument are harsh, and the organist indifferent. The two organs in the cathedral are utterly unworthy of the edifice.

How admirably Santa Croce, the Westminster Abbey of Florence, is adapted for sacred music, was made very apparent last winter, by two musical services in honour of Prince Oddone and the Marquis d'Azeglio. The funds in both cases were supplied by Government. Huge catafalques, covered with appropriate designs, were erected in the nave, and the entire end of the north transept was occupied by an orchestra numbering some five hundred performers.

If fond of military music—and who is not?—you

may hear it frequently in Florence. Twice daily, during the changing of the guard at the Pitti Palace, bands play, and though these are weak in comparison to the glorious strength of the Austrian bands, the performances are generally very pleasing, and the selections played extremely good.

'Ma signor che volete,' said a Florentine to me one day, in answer to my complaints respecting the dearth of popular amusements in Florence, and especially of concerts for the people, 'she is but a baby in swaddling-clothes.' With the exception of the popular minor theatres, and particularly those where the beloved Stenterello utters his witticisms and plays his pranks, there are no public places of amusement in Florence where the people can spend the evening: doubtless, however, if this city continues to be the capital of Italy, there will be cafés chantant, casinos, and other public musical entertainments. But if the Florentines are without 'cheap concerts, let them render grateful thanks to Apollo, if he be still the god of music, that they are not cursed by street organs. During the whole of last winter I heard but one of these ear-torturing instruments in Florence; from whence we may reasonably infer, that no harvest of pence is to be made in the capital of Italy by grinding these musical barrels.

It must be admitted, however, that there is no want of theatres in Florence. Even at the increased price of admission, the drama may be enjoyed without any great money sacrifice, the average price of a pit ticket being one and a half francs.

Comedy is more popular than tragedy, and indeed, excepting when Ristori acts, which is seldom, the latter is rarely performed in Florence. But many dramatic pieces in Italy which we should class with melodramas, are called comedies; such, for example, as the story of Ginevra Amieri, which forms the subject of a popular comedy.

This lady, having married a Florentine nobleman of the name of Agolanti, with whom she appears to have lived very unhappily, after a brief illness, fell into a trance, and being supposed to be dead, was laid in the family vault between the Duomo and the Campanile. During the night she awoke, and the door of the vault having by good fortune been left unsecured, she was enabled to return to the outer world, and her husband's house. But the latter no sooner saw his wife's pale face and shrouded figure, than, believing, as the story runs, that she had come from another world to upbraid him for his cruelty, he took to his heels and ran away.

Thus forsaken, the lady repaired to a former

lover, who, undismayed by the sight of his mistress in her grave-clothes, received her kindly, and applied such excellent restoratives, that in a few days she recovered. With proper dramatic propriety, the marriage with Count Agolanti was set aside, and the lover and the lady were married. The street, we may add, through which the latter passed from her house to the vault, was called Via della Morte.

Amateur theatricals cannot be said to flourish in Florence; their former home—a fine hall in a palazzo in the Fondaccio San Spirito—has been lately turned into a Protestant Church, and at present, when these entertainments are organised, they have no fixed locus in the city. By the kindness of the proprietor of one of the best houses in Florence, some amateur performances were given last winter in his palazzo, at which the beautiful young Countess Palma Karolyi, who has lately taken the veil, greatly distinguished herself.

Though Florence is without an amateur theatre, there is one of considerable dimensions near the city. It adjoins the Villa Mozzi Spence at Fiesole, and was built by Mr. William Spence from his own designs. The edifice is a pattern of what an amateur theatre should be, combining, in the most artistic manner, elegance, comfort, and excellent ventilation. It

contains forty-five boxes, and accommodates altogether about 800 persons. A portrait of Goldoni is painted *en grisaille* over the proscenium, flanked by two of Shakspeare and Molière.

Here Grisi and Mario, whose fine Villa Salviata is in the vicinity, have performed, and many of our compatriots who have passed the winter in Florence, doubtless remember with pleasure evenings spent in this very elegant theatre. Adjoining it is a commodious room, that may be used for dining or supper purposes, the walls of which are covered with frescoes representing lovely landscapes, amidst which are Watteau-like figures, pleasantly suggestive of repasts and agreeable company. The front of the theatre abuts on the piazza of Fiesole, and the exterior wall of the back is decorated by a spirited copy in fresco of Guido's 'Aurora,' executed by Mr. Spence.

The view from the terrace under this wall is magnificent, embracing a vast extent of the Val d'Arno, the Apennines, and nearly the whole of Florence.

In front of the terrace is a vineyard, in which remains of an Etruscan building were discovered last winter. Bases of columns of large dimensions have been laid bare; and there is every probability that just where Mr. Spence has erected his elegant theatre, the Etruscans built a large temple.

CHAPTER XVI.

Excursion to Torricella—Opening of a New Line of Railway—Numerous Party—Montevarchi—Fossil-beds—Hannibal's Carthaginian Elephants—Pontassieve — Vallombrosa — Contadini — Engineering Difficulties—Chestnut Forests—The Contadini and their Swine—The Barber Burchiello—Scared Animals—Val di Chiana—Former poisonous nature of this District—Various attempts to Reclaim it—Count Fossombroni's Plan—Success attending it—Buonaparte's Opinion of Fossombroni—Present Condition of the District—Drainage of the Maremma—Cortona—St. Margherita—Huge Stones—Virgil's Corythus—Art Treasures of Cortona—Lake Thrasimene—Site of the Battle—The Sanguinetto Brook—Relics of the Battle—Arrive at Torricella—A beautiful Peasant—A warm Welcome—Poetical Effusion—Ancient Olive-trees—Arezzo—A bounteous Banquet—No Speeches—Santa Maria della Pieve—Petrarch's Birth-house—Famous Well—Celebrated Houses—Scanty supply of Literature—A sleepy City—Past and Present Travelling in Italy—Smollett's Account of his Journey from Perugia to Florence.

Although Florence is still one of those charming cities, where, though dwelling amidst streets, you may look on the country in the form of the soft heights of Miniato and Bellosguardo, and the more distant Apennines, with their grand curves of

strength, it is pleasant and wholesome to body and soul to turn one's back occasionally on

> The crowd, the hum, the shock of men,

and to commune closely with nature. So, having been invited to join a party of the directors of a railway and their friends on the occasion of opening a new line from Florence to Torricella on Lake Thrasimene, I gladly accepted the invitation, and, trusting that you will not object to a little variety, I will ask you to accompany me on the excursion.

We met at seven in the morning at the railway station, and a few minutes after, to the number of four hundred, flags flying and bands playing, started in first-class carriages. As far as Montevarchi our route is over a line that has been opened for some time, abounding in picturesque beauties however; for immediately after leaving Florence, we ascend the mountain-slopes, proceeding along the left bank of the Arno, through deep cuttings, to Incisa, which derives its name from its peculiar situation. A geologist might spend many days with considerable profit in this locality, for there are few richer fossil-beds in Europe than those between Incisa and Montevarchi. Here, in far back ages, innumerable herds of mastodons, elephants, hippopotami, rhinoceroses,

tigers, hyenas, bears, and deer, lived, many bones of which may be seen in the Royal Museum at Florence.

Historians, who frequently arrive at conclusions by no means borne out by facts, when they desire to support a favourite theory, were in the habit, before the lights of science burned as brightly as they do now, of pointing to these fossil remains as being those of the Carthaginian elephants which accompanied Hannibal in his famous expedition.*.

At Pontassieve, about ten miles from Florence, we are at the mouth of the valley leading to Vallombrosa. But tempting as is the scene, gay with early flowers, which flush the borders of the Siève, deep snow still surrounds the monastery, robing the crests of the Apennines with white, and the monks must be left unvisited for several more weeks.

Beyond Montevarchi the iron horse steams over new ground. Hundreds of peasants were ranged on either side of the line, dressed in their holiday garments, which, alas! have little now left that is picturesque. Many women ply the distaff while they stand gazing at the *maravigliósa mácchina*, as they

* Some fossil tusks suspended over one of the entrances to the cathedral of Arezzo, are believed by the inhabitants to be the tusks of Hannibal's elephants.

call the locomotive. Among them, handsome faces, marred, alas! by heavy field labour. Nevertheless the majority of the peasants would make good subjects for pictures—the women with their green robes, massive gold earrings, huge coral necklaces, and profusion of raven-black hair, ignorant of all chignon devices; and the men, bronzed by the sun which fattens the grapes in their vineyards; for now we are—

> In lands where the olives grow,
> Where the sun with a golden mouth can blow
> Blue bubbles of grapes down a vineyard row.

Priests, too, come to look at us, not perhaps approvingly, for locomotion by steam and Vatican ideas of progress do not harmonise; but for all this we think we can see that they give us welcome as we pass, more than one waving a doubtfully clean handkerchief, and joining in the *grida festévole* of the parishioners. We go piano piano, the rails being laid on very treacherous ground, which has a dangerous tendency to give way, in consequence of its alluvial nature; and thus all are enabled to obtain a good view of the train. The engineering difficulties were, consequently, very great, and extended nearly over the entire extent of new railway, about seventy-six miles. They culminated at the tunnels,

which, it was gratifying to hear, have been made by English engineers.

But, slowly as we progress, the sight and snorting of our locomotive fill the herds of swine feeding by the rail-side with terror, and utterly heedless of the familiar voices of the swineherds, who shout at them, they rush down the mountain-side like their possessed forefathers, and would plunge into a sea, were there one to receive them. For here we are not far from vast chestnut forests, bountiful to man as well as to swine; their fruit, when ground into flour, being converted into bread, cakes, and polenta, much relished by the peasants. The barber Burchiello has immortalised these forests, after his quaint fashion of versifying; and though you may agree with Dante, who rather severely confounds the chestnut-eating Casentines with their hogs, you will be thankful that, being so useful to man and beast, these chestnut forests still flourish. For many miles you may walk in these temples of nature—

> Pillar'd with the grand old forests,
> Roof'd with broad expansive blue;
> Flowers springing up for carpets,
> Bathed in pearly-hanging dew.

Mules and donkeys, too, which had been tied up by their owners, who come to gaze at us, break their

bonds, and quickly getting rid of their loads, kick their heels and gallop furiously away. And so on through country where now —

> Huge olives crystallise the vales
> And slopes, until the hills grow strong,

until we come to a pause at Arezzo. Here the station was gay with flaunting flags, banners, and flowers, while numerous bands of the national guard and other corps blared their loudest, the occasion being one, in their opinion, more for noise than harmony. A vast pavilion adjoining the station was also got up in a most showy manner; but we shall have plenty of time to see it and Arezzo when we return, for here we are to dine. So when the steam-horse has baited, we start again, obtain pleasing glimpses of the town as we leave the station, and are soon at the entrance to the once infamous Val di Chiana, selected by Dante as the seat of pestilent fevers, described in the 'Inferno,' and commencing with the lines—

> Qual dolor fora, se degli spedali
> Di Val di Chiana tra il Luglio e il Settembre.*

Indeed, so unhappily celebrated was this Chiana Valley, that the name appears to have been used as

* Canto xxix.

symbolical of marshes. Thus Pulci, in the 'Morgante Maggiore,' says—

> Tutto quel giorno cavalcato avviene
> Per bosche, per burróne, per *mille chiane*,
> E non s'avevon messo nulla in seno.

The history of the improvements effected in the Val di Chiana is most interesting; and while we are passing within view of the rich corn-fields, vineyards, and olive-gardens, let us look a little at what has been done to reclaim this once poisonous swamp.

The Val di Chiana is enclosed by two nearly parallel mountain-chains, bounded on the north and south by the rivers Arno and Paglia. As far back as 1525, various schemes were laid before the Tuscan Government to ameliorate the pestilential state of this district, which was then estimated to be no less than 60 miles long, by 2 to 5 broad,* the entire extent redolent of malaria, locally called *puzzo di padula*, or marsh stink. You would never suppose, that the glorious company of hills surrounding this district, looked down formerly on such a scene of desolation and misery. The poisonous nature of this swamp was supposed to arise from the decay of

* A very curious map of the Val di Chiana, previous to being reclaimed, is preserved in the public library at Arezzo.

vegetable matter, and particularly of various kinds of weeds common in Tuscan marshes. Many writers allude to it in their works on Tuscany, but perhaps the most interesting account is that given by Rondinelli.* He describes the rushes, weeds, &c. forming islands in the swamp, which sunk and rose according to meteorological influences, and adds, that the entire district was so fearfully deadly, that no smile was ever seen around the cradle of the new-born babe.

Galileo, Torricelli, Castelli, and Viviani, applied their eminent engineering and mechanical abilities to solve the important problem how this plague spot, which was yearly eating deeper into the land, could be rendered innocuous and fertile. Torricelli, curiously enough, nearly arrived at the solution, when, unfortunately, he abandoned the prosecution of his plan.

The result was the expenditure of very large sums of money, without effecting any permanent amelioration, all the plans having miscarried, because they generally involved the coercion of natural laws, instead of endeavouring to turn them to account.

Such was the state of affairs, when a master-mind

* *Stato Antico e Moderno della Città di Arezzo*, 1685.

appeared on the scene, who, without possessing the high scientific education of those who had failed in solving the problem, proved superior to them in at least one respect; for, instead of attempting to thwart nature, he availed himself of her laws to carry out his plans. This was Count Fossombroni, a name that will ever be associated with one of the greatest agricultural improvements that has benefited mankind.

The simplicity of his system is so great, that we naturally wonder that it should have escaped his predecessors. It consisted in merely allowing the alluvium borne by running waters into the marshes, to fill them up, care being taken to enclose the marshes for its reception, and then permitting the water to drain off. This system bears the local name of *colmate*, or cumulative. Although Fossombroni's system is in itself extremely simple, considerable engineering skill was required to carry it into effect, and especially when a great number of *colmates* had to be constructed, as was the case in the Val di Chiana.

By making use of the numerous streams flowing down the mountain-slopes, all carrying alluvium with them, and by a network of skilfully-constructed *colmates*, Count Fossombroni succeeded finally in

raising the level of the vast marsh, so as to cause the waters to flow off freely to localities where they could not be injurious, the result being, that the Val di Chiana was not only rendered healthy and fertile, but the river of that name, which formerly flowed sluggishly towards the Tiber, now runs into the Arno, and in a direction opposite to that of its former course. Nor has this change been productive of any bad consequences as regards serious floodings of the Arno. These, indeed, are more due to the *Sieve*. There is a local proverb,—

Arno non cresce
Se Sieve non mesce;

and the comparatively pure waters of the Chiana, mixing with the turbid matter of the Sieve, are more beneficial than otherwise. The enormous quantity of alluvium carried down by this river is amazing. Travelling along its banks, the salmon-fisher sees innumerable pools with the most advantageous stands, which—bearing in mind the proximity of this river to the sea—would, in a high latitude, be full of salmon and other fish: but here the water is turbid and fishless.

The vast hydraulic works of Count Fossombroni may be briefly described as the desiccation of an

enormous swamp by means of coating it with a stratum of alluvium, which becomes hard by exposure to the air as it rises in elevation. The first Napoleon, who was greatly interested with these works, said of Fossombroni, in allusion to his labours being carried on in a narrow valley, that he was *un géant dans un entresol.* It has been truly said that some men have been 'as levers to uplift the earth, and roll it in another course.' Fossombroni may be classed most pertinently among these. In 1788 he was appointed engineer-in-chief of the hydraulic operations in the Val di Chiana, by the Grand Duke Peter Leopold I.* The appointment was highly judicious; for it may now be said, with great truth,

* This sovereign was one of the most enlightened rulers that Tuscany has ever seen. He ruled, according to Beccaria's maxim,

La massima felicità divisa nel maggior numero.

The drainage of the Maremma was subsequently undertaken by his grandson Leopold II.; of whom, and his labours in this respect Giusti writes:—

Il Toscano Morfeo vien lemme lemme
Di papavori cinto e di lattuga;
Che per la smania d'eternarsi asciuga
Tasche e maremme.

Which may be thus translated:—

The Tuscan Morpheus softly steals along
With poppies and with lettuce-garlands crowned;
Eager for immortality, he drains
Our pockets and the marshes.

that no permanent swampy lands exist between Arezzo and Chiusi.

It is worthy of mention, at this period, when so-called prehistoric remains engross so much attention, that, in making the *colmates* in the Val di Chiana, numerous vestiges of very ancient dwellings have been discovered in the valley.

Thus signally has science triumphed over formidable difficulties, converting a howling wilderness, where pestilence cursed the land, to fertile plains, waving with corn and purple with grapes. Nor are Fossombroni's triumphs limited to the Val di Chiana. Adopting his system, Commendatore Alessandro Manetti has reclaimed large tracts of the terrible Maremma; and, when Italy shall have turned her swords into reaping-hooks, we may hope to see other unwholesome districts reclaimed.*

But we have arrived at Cortona, or rather under it; for that most ancient Etruscan city occupies the crest of a hill that, were the Apennines not present, would rank as a mountain. Stern and solemn—more like a fortress than an ecclesiastical edifice—towers the *ci-devant* vast convent of St. Margherita

* Those who take an interest in these works, are referred, for further details, to the *Giornale dell' Ingegnere ed Agronomo*, published at Milan.

over the surrounding buildings, and the military impression is deepened by the old walls still girding the city, which are composed of vast uncemented blocks of stone, in many cases fourteen feet long.

Few ancient cities are so unaltered as Cortona; and, as the Corythus of Virgil, and the home of the Accademia Etrusca of Italy, whose president bears the title of Lucumo, the ancient appellation of the chiefs of Etruria, it possesses peculiar interest to the classical and archæological traveller. Hitherto, however, from its comparative inaccessibility and deficient hotel accommodation,* Cortona has been little visited; but now that it is accessible by railway, I earnestly advise all who can spare time not to pass it hurriedly by. Let us hope, too, that the advent of tourists will have the effect of putting an end to the sale of the art treasures of Cortona. The magnificent painted window in the Bargello collection, was sold by the authorities of the city, much to their disgrace; and many other artistic treasures have been permitted to leave the city.

Beautiful, most beautiful, is the country between Cortona and Lake Thrasimene. Wooded hills, bold

* A friend of mine, who passed a night at Cortona this spring was unable to obtain food at the principal hotel. 'We can give you a bed,' said the host, 'but for meals, you must go to the Trattoria.'

near their parent mountains, but sinking to soft undulations as they approach the lake; fertile vales and plains, charmingly diversified, make up so lovely a scene, that it is highly tantalising to pass through the country at railway speed. Every locality, too, is pregnant with historical interest; for here the Roman legions went down before the victorious army of Hannibal. No battle-ground is, indeed, more plainly marked than this, where giants in arms struggled for mastery. All familiar with the stormy story of that tremendous battle, cannot view the scenes of its various events, without being greatly interested. How deeply they impressed Byron, is evident by the powerful description given of them and the battle in 'Childe Harold.' Centuries have passed since Flaminius fell, but the bloody story is still known to the peasants who conduct the stranger to the ground between the brook Sanguinetto and the hills, and tell him, with great probable truth, that there the battle raged most fiercely. There the greatest quantity of human bones have been found, and the recent railway earth-works led to the discovery of various relics of a similar nature.

But, terrific as was that struggle—the combatants, as we are told, taking no heed of an earth-

quake that made the ground reel beneath their feet as they fought—the consequences, great as they were, sink into insignificance compared to the civilising results arising from the iron horse which now snorts across the ancient battle-ground.

> Far other scene is Thrasimene now;
> Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain
> Rent by no ravage, save the gentle plough,

wrote Byron, little dreaming of the far more important 'ravage' made by the railway now intersecting the plain; by the aid of which many future tourists will be enabled to see this famous battle-field, and the fair lake. The train swept round the north bay of this fine sheet of water, until it came finally to rest at Torricella, the termination of our journey. Here were assembled thousands of peasants, with a considerable number of ladies and gentlemen, who had journeyed from Perugia, twelve miles distant, to satisfy their curiosity and give us welcome.

Among the peasants was a girl of great beauty. Painters would have raved about her, and as a model she might make a little fortune. Large, soft, and lustrous eyes, with regular features, abounding in rich, glowing, and luxurious charms. The spoiling influences of out-door labour had not marred her complexion; a light bloom played round her cheeks and

lips; and she stood before the windows of our carriage so full of rich, warm life, so breathing an image of youth and grace and sweetness, that she seemed a living Madonna. And what rendered her more attractive, was her apparent unconsciousness of her own loveliness.

> Thoughtless of beauty, she was Beauty's self,
> Recluse among the deep embowering woods;
> As in the hollow breast of Apennine,
> Beneath the shelter of encircling hills,
> A myrtle rises, far from human eyes,
> And breathes its balmy fragrance o'er the wild.

In the spirit of Italian enthusiasm and sentiment, the greetings of welcome from those who came forth to meet us blossomed into verse. A short poem, descriptive of the new line of railway, and the great advantages that will arise from it, was presented to each visitor. The author was a gentleman of Perugia; and if you have any curiosity to see how he acquitted himself, here is a verse of his poem:—

> Oh! vola, vola, sul fervido arringo
> Vola, vola, agile incolume
> Maravigliosa macchina,
> Portatrice instancabile
> Di viventi e di cose.
> Al sire che siede sull' Arno,
> Auspice e custode degl' Itali destini,
> Di delle genti contermini,
> Di della città del Trasimeno
> I voti, le speranze, l' amore.

This ceremony over, the bands struck up, and extensive fraternising took place, during which I availed myself of the opportunity to make a hurried sketch of the stirring scene.

Very pleasant would it have been to have dallied on the picturesque shores of the lake for some hours, for the temperature was that of summer. Wide-spreading groves of olive-trees tended to give a leafy character to the landscape. The foliage of this tree is not, it is true, that of the dark greenwoods of summer, but it possesses lovely greens of its own, abounding in beauty. The colour greatly depends on the age of the tree, being in some cases dark as a cypress, in others like silvery plumes. How weried is the appearance of a grove of the ancient trees! And here, covering the hillsides, and fringing the lake, were patriarchs of the race, in all probability many centuries old.* It has been said, and with great apparent truth, that an olive-wood suggested to Dante the idea of souls imprisoned in the trunks and branches of trees. Nowhere will you see more fantastic olive-trees than here. Gashed, hacked, and hewed, to make

* The olive-tree was first planted in Italy 562 B.C. Pliny mentions one that was known to be 1600 years old.

them throw out new wood, the trunks assume the most extraordinary shapes; bulging, in some places, as if afflicted with elephantiasis, and at others, so attenuated and contorted, that you wonder how the slender bole can sustain such a head of foliage. No painter has done full justice to this tree. Gaspar Poussin, who lived much beneath its shadow, has probably painted it better than any other artist, but even his representations of olive-trees are by no means satisfactory.

Trumpet-blasts, and the fierce screams of the locomotive, warned us that the time for our departure had arrived, as dinner awaited us at Arezzo. So, amidst farewell shouts, we re-entered our carriage, and sped on our homeward journey.

Sincerely do I hope that the shareholders of this new railway will reap large profits from the undertaking, for I owe them thanks for a most excellent repast at Arezzo; which, we may presume, was provided at their expense: banquet, rather, let me call it, for viands and wines were not only abundant but of first-rate excellence. Of course, among the latter, we had the famous red sparkling wine of Arezzo, which is said

to be as good now as when Redi thus sang its praises:—

O di quel che vermigliuzzo,
Brillantuzzo,
Fa superbo l' Aretino.

And what enhanced the pleasure of all these most acceptable good things, was the happy fact, that you were not compelled to listen to dreary speeches, made up of empty platitudes, which, as a rule, make sad wreck of the social enjoyment of our public entertainments. Greatly to their praise be it said, the directors resolved that there should be no speaking at all; wisely believing that the guests would prefer making acquaintance with Arezzo, to listening to vapid oratory.

So, when the inner man was satisfied, we set off to explore this most picturesque town, which we found arrayed in festal robes. Every house was decorated, many exhibited rare and beautiful tapestry, and all the inhabitants were out, *en grande toilette*, following and gazing at the strangers, while we gazed at their buildings. By far the most remarkable of these is the church of Santa Maria della Pieve, which dates from the beginning of the ninth century, and is supposed to occupy the site of a temple of Bacchus. The *façade* is very singular,

consisting of a series of colonnades containing sixty pillars, no two of which are alike. This curious edifice is undergoing thorough restoration, which promises to be of an honest nature. Of the other buildings, chronicled as they are in guide-books, no mention need be made; but we may except Petrarch's house, to which I made a pilgrimage. It is certainly not logical, but one is always inclined to associate picturesque features with a poet's birthplace, and are distressed if the reality fall short of the imaginative picture. Great was my disappointment, therefore, when a man who had kindly offered to act as guide, stopped before a most unlovely-looking house, and told me that there Petrarch was born. A long laudatory inscription on white marble records the fact; but the house has such a modern appearance, that I could not have entered it with feelings of sufficient faith to be at all interested in seeing the interior. It may appear wanting in veneration, but I confess that the well opposite the poet's house interested me more than the latter. It has been immortalised by Boccaccio; and those who are curious to know how a lover triumphed over apparently insurmountable difficulties, are referred to that author's story of Tofano and his wife Monna Ghita.

Arezzo abounds with celebrated houses, bearing appropriate inscriptions; for the city has a long roll of eminent men among her citizens. Vasari's house is especially interesting, being little changed since the period when it was occupied by him, and it still contains relics of that artist and biographer. But indeed Arezzo is full of interesting buildings, which, with few exceptions, seem steeped in the gloom and repose of past ages. How little it has been affected by the outward world, is evident by the fact that, although possessing a population of nearly 11,000, I was unable to obtain a single engraving or photograph of any one of the picturesque or remarkable buildings in the town, and the stock-in-trade of the only bookseller was limited to some fifty theological and law books. The opening of the railway will, however, bring a living stream of thought and enterprise into the old and sleepy city. Let us hope that the latter may not take the form of vicious restoration; for though railways are more utilitarian than grand ancient buildings, these have their uses, which should not be lightly set aside. We arrived at Florence as the night fell, greatly pleased with our excursion; having accomplished in the day what formerly occupied a *vetturino* nearly a week. How great is the differ-

ence between steam travel, through the country we traversed, and locomotion by posting a hundred years ago, will be seen by Smollett's amusing account of his journey, in 1764, over the same ground.

'From Perugia to Florence the posts are all double, and the road is so bad, that we never could travel more than eight and twenty miles a day. We were often obliged to quit the carriage, and walk up steep mountains; and the way in general was so unequal and stony, that we were jolted even to the danger of our lives. I never felt any sort of exercise or fatigue so intolerable, and I did not fail to bestow an hundred benedictions per diem on the banker, Barazzi, by whose advice we had taken this road. If the coach had not been incredibly strong, it must have been shattered to pieces. The fifth night we passed at a place called Comoccia, a miserable cabaret, where we were fain to cook our own supper, and lay in a musty chamber, which had never known a fire, and, indeed, had no fireplace, and where we ran the risk of being devoured by rats. Next day one of the irons of the coach gave way at Arezzo, where we were detained several hours before it could be accommodated.

'I might have taken this opportunity to view the

remains of the ancient Etruscan amphitheatre, and the Temple of Hercules, standing in the neighbourhood of this place, but the blacksmith assured me that his work would be finished in a few minutes, and as I had nothing so much at heart as the speedy accomplishment of this disagreeable journey, I chose to suppress my curiosity, rather than be the occasion of a moment's delay. But all the nights we had hitherto passed on the road were comfortable in comparison to this, which we suffered at a small village, the name of which I do not remember. The house was dismal and dirty beyond all description, the bed-clothes filthy enough to turn the stomach of a muleteer; and the victuals were cooked in such a manner, that even a Hottentot could not have beheld them without loathing. We had, happily, sheets of our own, which were spread upon a mattress; and here I took my repose, wrapped in a great coat—if that could be called repose which was interrupted by innumerable stings of vermin.'

Poor Smollett, it is evident that the miseries of this journey entirely overbore all pleasure derivable from the grand and beautiful scenery through which he passed. But the author of 'Humphrey Clinker' was a man of extremely irritable temperament, and when he travelled in Italy, his constitution was

shattered,* and his mind ill at ease, in consequence of domestic troubles, so we cannot be surprised that he should have put a large dose of gall in his ink. At the same time it must be admitted that travelling in Italy when Smollett wrote, must have been more productive of adventure than enjoyment, requiring a strong constitution to render it at all endurable.

Now, as you see, you can journey from Florence to Perugia and Foligno in a short day, and I strongly advise those going to Rome from the former city, to take this route.

* He died in Italy, and was buried in the Protestant cemetery at Leghorn.

CHAPTER XVII.

Establishment of the Casa di Lavoro by Napoleon I.—The former Plague of Mendicants in Florence—Beckford and the Beggars—Present Law in Florence respecting Beggars—Licenses to Beg—Organisation of the Casa di Lavoro—Education of the Paupers—Trades carried on—Average Daily Cost of each Pauper—Reputation of the Manufactures of the Establishment—Conduct of the Men and Women—Società Anonima Edificatrice—Dwellings for the Working Classes—Nature of them—Rental of Rooms—Prosperous Condition of the Tenants—Absence of Drunkenness.

Among the most beneficial acts of Napoleon I., when Italy was under his sway, was his establishment of the Pia Casa di Lavoro, or great workhouse, in the Via dei Malcontenti, west of Santa Croce. This vast building is capable of containing 3,000 inmates, and the principal feature in the organisation of the establishment is, that all who come within its influence shall, as far as possible, maintain themselves.

Those who knew Florence in the Grand Ducal days, will doubtless remember the plague of beggars. A law, passed in 1859, put an end to this not only in the city,*

* Mr. Beckford states that he was stopped at noonday in the Piazza del Duomo by two sturdy beggars armed with clubs. When

but throughout the kingdom of Italy; exceptions being made in favour of certain districts where houses for the maintenance of paupers have not yet been established, and there, only those beggars are allowed to solicit alms who are infirm and absolutely without friends or relations to afford them assistance. Beggars under this category are given a license to beg, which appears in the form of a small metal ticket hung round the neck. This rule does not apply to Florence, where, if a beggar be seen demanding alms in the streets the police have instructions to take him to the Casa di Lavoro. Should it be found on examination that he has no available means of existence, he is kept in the establishment and made to exercise a trade, if master of one, and in default of this compelled to work in some profitable manner.

Favoured by the acquaintance of Signor Peri, the director, I visited the establishment under his charge, and was greatly struck by the admirable organisation existing throughout it. There are schools for children and adults, at which every person is required to attend for two hours daily. Children are taught to read and write, and boys, on attaining the age

they found that he was resolutely determined to give them nothing, one said to the other, 'He is a stranger; let him pass.' 'I don't think,' adds Mr. Beckford, 'that I was much frightened, but I shall not soon forget their ugly faces.'

of twelve years, are instructed in some trade under the supervision of skilful masters, while girls are brought up in a manner fitting them to become domestic servants. In the adult schools higher branches of education are taught, including geometry and design, with the view of rendering these acquirements useful in certain trades carried on in the establishment. The inmates are employed on a great variety of industrial occupations. Silks and fine damasks are woven, as well as cotton, linen, and woollen cloths. Excellent carriages are built, furniture of all kinds manufactured, boots and shoes made in enormous quantities for the army and navy, and, in short, every species of profitable manufacture is carried on. Including all expenses of the establishment, each person costs on an average ninepence a day. A small percentage of the profits derived from the sale of the manufactures, is placed to the credit of those by whom they have been made, but under no circumstances can any inmate earn more than 1*s.* 3*d.* a week. At the beginning of this year, in consequence of extraordinary expenses attending the change of capital, the establishment was in debt to the Government, but Signor Peri informed me that he hoped to cancel this debt in the course of a few years.

There is always a good demand for the manufactures of the Casa di Lavoro, as they bear a high character for excellence of workmanship. Many articles have gained medals and honourable mention at various exhibitions on the continent and in England. Formerly a very extensive manufacture was carried on here of red worsted Phrygian caps, worn by mariners in the Adriatic and Mediterranean, but this has recently almost entirely fallen off.

Out of 2,400 men and women in the establishment at the time of my visit, 164 were in the infirmary, principally from diseases from which they were suffering when they entered the 'Casa.' This is extremely healthy, and probably few paupers enjoy such beautiful views as the windows of the 'Casa' command, though it is very doubtful if enjoyment of this kind be appreciated by them.

The men, as a rule, are very orderly, and give little or no trouble. The report of the women's conduct is not so good, women here, as in the majority of penitentiaries in England, being more disposed to be insubordinate than men. You may remember that a prison matron who published an interesting book on her experiences, tells us that the women under her superintendence were accustomed to indulge in periodical breakings out. Similar misconduct is much more

common in the Casa di Lavoro among the women than the men. Paradoxical as it may appear, it is nevertheless certain, that though woman possesses a much more feeble organisation than man, yet the desire to commit wilful and obstinate acts exists with her in a far stronger degree than it does in the opposite sex, amounting frequently, under circumstances of extremely slight provocation, to utter desperation and recklessness. Though less demonstrative, perhaps there are in all places of confinement many to whom Lady Macbeth's words fitly apply:—

> . . . . . unsex me here,
> And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
> Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood,
> Stop up the access and passage to remorse;
> That no compunctious visitings of nature
> Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
> The effect and it!

Fully as interesting as the great Tuscan workhouse is the Società Anonima Edificatrice. This institution, entirely independent of Government aid, has probably done more for the working classes in Florence than any other philanthropic establishment. At a moderate rent, it not only provides dwellings for these, but also takes the necessary measures to keep the apartments in a highly sanitary state, and

to render them in all respects comfortable to their occupants.

The merit of the plan on which the society is based, attaches to Dr. Francesco Brocchi and Signor Giudotti, who drew up the design in 1849. Briefly, it may be said to consist in the working classes furnishing the capital to build their own houses, the funds invested by them in savings banks being lent to a society of noblemen and gentlemen under ample security at five per cent. interest. With this capital the society erect suitable buildings for operatives, divided into rooms, the rents of which are in all cases fixed by the interest of the money advanced, and the necessary outlay for repairs, management, &c. &c. The society is managed by a council of ten, who elect a president and secretary and a committee of our, whose duty it is to inspect the buildings erected, or in course of construction.

Immediately after the establishment of the society in 1849, the municipality of Florence made a concession to it of a piece of vacant ground near the entrance to the Cascine from the Lung' Arno, in the Via Montebello, consisting of 7,728 square mètres, on the condition that houses should be erected on the site containing rooms suitable for the occupation

of the working classes, and that the rents should be moderate.

Accompanied by the Marquis Garzoni, president of the society, I visited these buildings. The rooms, averaging fifteen feet square and twelve in height, are admirably arranged for the requirements of operatives. A small kitchen is attached to each set of rooms, and every four sets of apartments have access to an adjoining courtyard, and to a well, communication being effected between the well and the upper rooms by means of buckets guided by wires. To us, habituated to grey skies and chilly temperature, rooms without fireplaces appear rather comfortless; but, bearing in mind that many apartments in stately palaces in Florence are without these appendages, their absence in the rooms of operatives in sunny Italy is of very little moment, and with respect to those under discussion, ventilation is provided for very effectively.

The furniture in all the rooms that I visited was of a superior description, being, with few exceptions, more like that in the houses of private tradesmen than in the dwellings of operatives. This comfort and wellbeing are doubtless in a great measure due to the circumstance that no operatives are received

as tenants unless they are furnished with high testimonials of their respectability and good moral character. So great is the desire to obtain rooms belonging to the society, that when a set is vacant, there are always at least a dozen applicants for them, and this rather by reason of the excellence of the accommodation, and convenience of the situation, than from any advantage arising from low rents. These are as follows:—For two rooms, 75 francs a year; for three, 110; for four, 220; and for five, 300, payable half-yearly in advance. The association, as a matter of course, pay all rates and taxes, and keep the halls, staircases, yards, &c. clean and in good repair. Four large buildings have been erected; one in the Via Montebello, containing 532 rooms; another in the Via Barbano, containing 398 rooms; another at St. Gallo, containing 336 rooms; and one at Mattanaia, containing 478 rooms; giving a total of 1,744 rooms. Weekly inspection of the buildings is made; and among the orders in force is one requiring the tenants to abstain from hanging any clothes or cloths out of the windows facing the streets. Thus these buildings, although their architecture is plain, bear considerable resemblance to some of the ancient palaces in

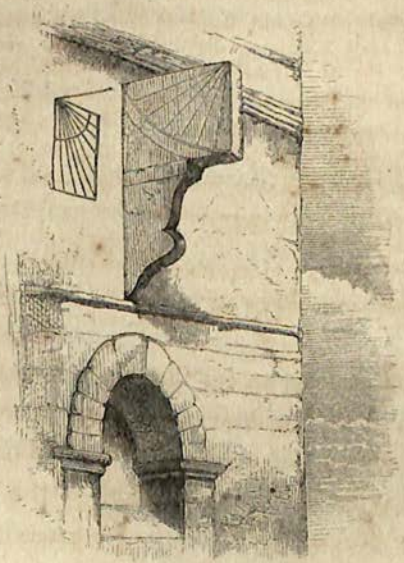
Florence, and do not give you the idea that they are the homes of artisans, to which class they are strictly confined.

A by-law of the society provides that primary schools shall be erected for the children of the tenants. These schools are under the management of the Society for the Education of Orphans.

The great demand for dwellings for the working classes in Florence, and the success that has attended the operations of the Società Edificatrice, encourage the committee to continue their good work; and it is expected that in the course of a year, upwards of 4,000 sets of apartments will be provided for their accommodation. The principal difficulty that the Society has to contend with consists in procuring labour; for there are so many Government works in progress that nearly every available hand is engaged.

The prosperity and happy condition of the occupiers of these most comfortable dwellings is greatly due to the invariable sobriety that prevails among their tenants. The demon of drunkenness, which may be said to go about like a roaring lion, devouring thousands in the streets and alleys of our cities and towns, is unknown here; and among the innumerable blessings resulting from this general

sobriety is the entire absence of the frightful wife and woman beating which degrades many of our working classes to the condition of brutes, and is a disgrace to England.



Quadrant on wall of Santa Maria Novella.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Murate—The great Criminal Prison in Florence—How to obtain Permission to Visit it—A Warder's Moral Reflection on Women—Effect of Lady Visitors on Prisoners and Lunatics—Former Inmates of the Murate—Cloistered Nuns—Scandalous Stories—System of the Murate—Number of Prisoners—Communication between Prisoners—The Chapel—Past and Present Prison Discipline—Comparison between Prisoners and Paupers—Misdirected Philanthropy—Convicts at Portland—Cost of the Prisoners in the Murate—Trades carried on—Elegant Boots—Physical Appearance of the Prisoners—Nature of their Crimes—Interview with a fearful Murderer—How he murdered his Victims—His attempt to commit Suicide—His Punishment—Nonexistence of Capital Punishment in Tuscany—Women Prisoners—The Debtors' Prison.

In painful contrast to the buildings described in the last chapter, is that known as the Murate. This is the chief prison in Florence. To visit this establishment, an order from the Minister of the Interior is absolutely necessary. There is no great difficulty in obtaining permission for a gentleman, but it is by no means easy for a lady to be included in the order. You will probably say that few ladies would be desirous of going through the Murate; however, some women have a very enquiring spirit, and to these it

may not be useless to state that, should they have a curiosity to see this prison, good interest will be necessary to procure admission. I was somewhat amused by a sly rebuke administered to ladies by the chief warder, who, on my observing that the authorities appeared to be very unwilling to allow women within the Murate, exclaimed, 'Why you see, signor, the regulations of our prison are extremely severe, and it is conducted on the silent system!' The advent of woman within the Murate is indeed so rare an event, that when it occurs, the sensation created is intense, and especially among those prisoners who have been long confined, and exhibit symptoms of mental alienation.

The late Dr. Cleghorn of Dublin, who was physician to a large asylum for the insane in that city, declared that he was always aware, without being informed, when lady visitors had passed through the establishment; the effect produced on the patients being, as a rule, precisely in proportion to the number of lady visitors, and the brightness of the colours of their dresses.

On the occasion of my visit to the Murate, I was accompanied by a lady, who was probably remembered for many days by the prisoners; several, to whom the outer world had long been a blank, regard-

ing her much in the light of a Madonna descended among them.

The Murate takes its name from a conventual establishment of cloistered nuns, who lived here, and who, though walled in for life, contrived to fill Florence with so many scandalous stories, that their institution acquired a very doubtful reputation; more due, however, it is stated, to priests than to the nuns.

The two great features of this prison are perpetual silence and compulsory labour: the proceeds of the latter pass to the State, with the exception of a small percentage of the profits arising from the sale of the manufactures, which are given to the prisoners at the expiration of their term of imprisonment, provided that their conduct has been good.

At the time of my visit, there were 1,084 prisoners under various sentences, ranging from one week to confinement for life. The cells are 15 feet long by 7 feet wide, and 8 feet high: The beds, which are iron, are placed at one side of the door—a bad arrangement, as the director who kindly accompanied us admitted, it being impossible to see the prisoners when they are lying down.

The prison consists of four stories, provided with galleries communicating with the cells, and with large work-rooms, where the prisoners carry on

trades, subject to constant supervision. Seeing some fifty or sixty prisoners provided, in many instances, with knives necessary for their occupations, and there being only two overseers with them, I was led to ask whether any apprehension of an outbreak was ever felt, and whether anything of the kind had taken place. 'Never,' was the reply; but, added the director, 'the prisoners are well aware that there is a large military force at hand, which would overpower them in a moment.' It is worthy of remark, that the prisoners, notwithstanding all preventive measures, communicate with each other by rapping on the walls of their cells, precisely as our English prisoners do.

The chapel is situated in a central part of the building, so disposed that when the prisoners are in their cells, by leaving the doors slightly open, but still secured by a chain, the religious service filters, as it were, into their narrow abodes; but the prisoners are not obliged to attend to the service, and may if they please lie on their beds, and fall asleep while the priest is officiating; another proof, if need be, that the State is not strict in religious matters.

Few features of moral training have engaged greater attention during late years than prison discipline. Before Howard's time, our prisons were a disgrace to England. The cells, with scarcely an

exception, reeked with foul abominations, amidst which the prisoners were left to perish, body and soul, disease frequently attacking them before they had been many hours in confinement. The natural consequence followed. The awful disclosures made by Howard and others, rendered prisons and prisoners favourite subjects for widespread philanthropy; reaction took place, and modern criminals are lodged and boarded in a manner that has gone far to strip prisons of much of their former terrors.

Such is the result of one of our most notable fits of periodical philanthropy; lavished, or, more properly speaking, wasted, on forgers, burglars, garrotters, and even murderers; and this too, be it noted, while our paupers are often undergoing an amount of misery in unclean workhouses, which would appal the Samaritanism of prison philanthropists.

It is, indeed, almost beyond the bounds of credulity, that while our felons are comfortably lodged, clothed, well fed, and attended by attentive prison officers, to whom they can at any hour of the day or night complain of grievances, and have them redressed, our paupers, generally speaking, from no fault of their own, are treated in a manner that is positively cruel.

The dull monotony of protracted agony endured

by our sick and infirm poor, is terrible. Official reports, though, as is to be apprehended, far from probing this social wound to the bottom, reveal an amount of corruption, almost normal in its nature, which, if England is to hold a place among civilised nations, must be cleansed.

Is it not monstrous that, while our felons are treated almost like gentlemen in distress, we should read of paupers sleeping, or rather huddled, four in a bed; and of sixteen thousand bedridden wretches in union infirmaries, perishing slowly from bed-sores and other miseries? This most painful phase of suffering humanity has excited the attention of continental nations, who, not unnaturally, find it difficult to reconcile England's treatment of the poor with her boasted wealth and civilisation. But just as long years passed before our prisons engaged public attention, being to the public generally what the Ergastula were to the Romans, so, we have gone on sending whole rivers of benevolence into other channels, often so arid and porous that they will not hold water; Exeter Hall, with phrenzied oratory, calling upon us to deliver the African from, in many cases, imaginary woes, while almost under the shadow of that cosmopolitan building, are evils and misery which call loudly for amelioration. But the audi-

ences crowding Exeter Hall, where religion waves her banner, and priests of various sects hold forth on the conversion of the African, probably conceive, as Lord Macaulay caustically suggests, that a wounded soldier is far more poetical than a bed-ridden moribund pauper; and thus, while lint-parties in war time are fashionable in Paris and London, among ladies of high rank, the poor are sadly neglected in the latter city. A better state of things is, however, at hand; and though a considerable time may elapse before public sympathy is fairly aroused, we are warranted in hoping that, as Government has promised to investigate this pauper question, with the view of amending poor-law legislation, a beneficial change will take place ere long in the treatment of our paupers.

But we must return to the more immediate subject of this chapter. It is well known that if you shut up a man, and feed him on bread and water, you will soon shatter his intellect, and probably send him into a state of hopeless idiocy. The modern felon would probably prefer being flogged to being put on low diet even for a week. And he is also well aware that his prison fare is generally very superior to that of labourers, while, at the same time, he does not work so hard as the latter. If you

have visited our great penal establishment at Portland, you must have observed how the convicts play, as it were, over their work, while the free labourers in the adjoining quarries toil like slaves to earn a poor subsistence. The exact ratio of work done by the convict, compared to that executed by the free man, is as three to five, the former number of labourers performing the same amount of work as five convicts. Even more painful is it to see the labourers, when the dinner hour arrives, retiring to some place badly sheltered from sun or rain, and eating a slender meal of bread and cheese, meat being very rarely included in the repast, while the convicts are marched off to a comfortable room, and regaled on substantial and excellent food; possessing, moreover, the privilege of sending back their rations for examination by the authorities, should they be considered indifferent in quality, or deficient in quantity.

The Italian Government have endeavoured to hit the *juste milieu* of this penal question, and especially in the matter of diet. Far from being neophilanthropists, who hold, that if felons are fed on bread and water, the State does its duty, they consider, on the other hand, that we treat our criminals too leniently, and feed them far too well. The result

at which they have arrived is, that each prisoner costs the country eighty cents a day—including all other prison expenses. How far the dietary, which gives them meat four days per week, answers the purposes of punishment, I am unable to say, but it has every appearance of agreeing well with the prisoners.

Accustomed as we are in England to the most rigid cleanliness in our penal establishments, the condition of the Murate is not satisfactory. The floors are dirty; and there is a want of good ventilation, which might be easily remedied.

An extensive printing establishment is attached to the prison, which turns out admirable specimens of typography, and prints largely for Government. Various descriptions of cloths are woven, and excellent boots and shoes manufactured. A prisoner in the room set apart for the shoe-making trade, requested permission (by signs) from the director who accompanied us, to show a pair of bronze kid boots, he had just completed, to the lady of our party. He was evidently proud of them, and with reason; for they were most elegantly made, adapted in all respects for the slender feet of a high-born lady, and would have borne favourable comparison with the best productions of a Melnotte. In London at least one

guinea would be demanded for such a pair of boots—here the price was nine shillings and sixpence; of this about ninepence would be set apart for the prisoner.

One of the most striking and pleasing features connected with our visit to the Murate was the almost total absence of that terrible low-browed and square-jawed brand of ruffianism prevalent among English felons. But it is right to add that the crimes committed by the prisoners were generally of a light nature. Brawls, arising from jealousy, when the hot blood of Italians is quickly stirred, and the knife is drawn, are of so common an occurrence in Italy, that we are prepared to find many prisoners under sentence of imprisonment in the Murate for having inflicted wounds under these circumstances. Looking at the expression of these men, subdued by silence and confinement, you would not suppose that passion could rage furiously within them. But such is the temperament of these children of the south; when not soul-ruffled, like the sea that bathes the shores of their lovely land on a calm summer's day, but when stirred by passion, terrible to behold, and most dangerous.

There were, however, exceptions to this general light degree of crime; one most notable. 'Tell your lady friend,' said the director, drawing me aside,

'that we are now going to see a murderer of the deepest dye. She may not like to look upon him.' It was evident that the director had no apprehensions respecting any prejudicial effect arising from the felon seeing visitors. Mr. Carlyle tells us that when he went through one of our prisons with a party, they were requested 'not to look openly at the murderers, or indeed seem to notice them at all, as it was found to cherish their vanity when visitors looked at them.'

Pausing before a cell in a remote part of the prison, the warder shot back the ponderous bolts, and throwing open the door, we beheld a man of middle age, by no means repulsive in appearance, but affording abundant evidence, by his unquiet eye and haggard expression, that solitary imprisonment was doing its slow but certain work of mental destruction.

This man was Bernianino de Cosimi, one of the most determined and diabolical murderers that the world has ever been cursed with. For the sake of acquiring in some cases only a few poor francs, he was in the habit of lodging with widows, and other unprotected women, and lulling them into fancied security by his engaging manners, seized an opportunity, when they were off their guard, of stabbing them in the neck with a knife, and holding them

down until they bled to death; and with a devilish perversion of religious feeling, the days on which he committed these fearful crimes were invariably marked by him in an almanack with a red cross. In this manner he killed seven poor creatures in Rome and Florence. At length justice overtook him, though not such justice as many persons would consider to be his due.

In consequence of a sad mistake, made shortly after the late Grand Duke of Tuscany came to power, the punishment of death for murder has been abolished in Tuscany. A young man found guilty of having murdered a man was guillotined, protesting his innocence to the last moment of life. Some years after the execution, the real murderer confessed the crime, and the Grand Duke, who, whatever may have been his faults, had a kind and sensitive heart, decreed that there should be no more capital punishments in his dominions. And so strongly was he supported in this opinion by his subjects, that it has been stated, probably with great truth, that were the law repealed, no jury in Tuscany could be found to convict a murderer. Attempts have been made, however, to set up the guillotine, which, according to popular belief, has been sent from Turin to Florence with the *roba* of government. But so antagonistic is the public feel-

ing to death punishment, that a gentleman of high social position, and eminently qualified to shine in Parliament, lost his election to a seat in the national legislature, because he declined to give a positive pledge that he would vote against capital punishment.

This question excited considerable attention last winter in Florence, when it was believed that Government purposed endeavouring to reintroduce capital punishment into Tuscany. Many print shops exhibited lithographic copies of Victor Hugo's drawing representing John Brown undergoing hanging, with a translation of the popular author's letter on that execution, in which, allowing his excessive horror of capital punishment to master impartial judgment, he declares that the gibbet is the felon's cross.

Thus, however much Bernianino de Cosimi deserves execution, the law protects him from violent death. But it may be questioned, and with great reason, whether solitary confinement for life in a cell, admitting no view beyond a narrow strip of sky, be not far more severe punishment than death by such a painless method as instant decapitation.

The murderer whom we now contemplated had been three years in his cell, during which period, if not absolutely insensible to all conscientious feelings, he must have undergone great mental agony. That

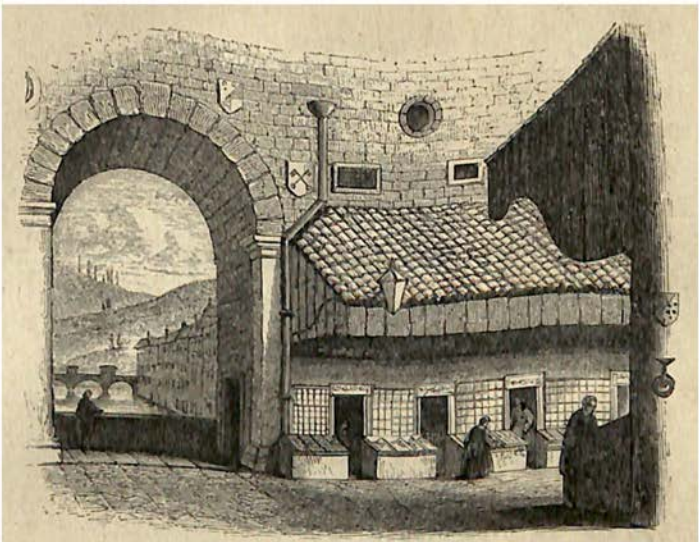
confinement was fast telling on him, was, as I have said, very evident. Only a few hours before we saw him, he had made a desperate attempt to take his life, which the law spared. Profiting by an oversight on the part of one of the warders, he had contrived to secrete a pewter spoon, and having brought the handle to a point by rubbing it on the stone floor of his cell, he endeavoured to terminate his wretched existence precisely in the same manner as he had killed his victims, viz. by opening a vein in his throat sufficiently to permit him to bleed to death. But the metal proved too soft for his purpose, and his intentions having been discovered, he was severely punished by the warders, who were obliged to use considerable force before the spoon could be wrested from him. Maddened by disappointment, and smarting from the blows he had received, he poured forth a torrent of invectives to the director, who vainly endeavoured to show him that he had only to thank himself for the punishment he had received. So furious indeed did he become, that I momentarily expected he would attack the director, who remained close to him, presenting, by his calm and impassive manner, a most remarkable contrast to the phrenzied rage of the murderer, whose expression might have furnished even Dante with an idea for his 'Inferno.'

During the interview between the director and the prisoner, I examined the books furnished to the latter. They were six in number, all of a religious nature, and all bore evident signs that they had been much read. But, whatever consolation and advice they contained, did not show forth in the conduct of the felon while we were with him; and although the director, with most praiseworthy patience, did all in his power to subdue the criminal's fierce passions, as the door finally closed on the wretched man, he hurled imprecations on those who had frustrated his suicidal intentions.

It will always be a divided question, whether murderers should undergo capital punishment. That a brutal scoundrel who slaughters God's creatures, as the murderer in the Murate has done, should be put out of the world as speedily as possible, is certainly in accordance with Divine law, as laid down in Holy Writ. The doom of murderers in ancient Germany, would be a fitting conclusion to such a wretch. 'When a German,' says Mr. Carlyle, 'had perpetrated a crime deserving death, the Germans of old condemned him to die with ignominy. Once convicted, they carried him to the deepest convenient peat bog, plunged him into it, drove an oaken frame down over him, and then solemnly, in the name of gods and

men, exclaimed, 'Thou prince of scoundrels! that is what we have had to think of thee, on clear acquaintance; our grim good night to thee is that. In the name of all the gods lie there, and be our partnership with thee dissolved henceforth. It will be better for us both, we imagine.'

The proportion of women to men in the Murate was very remarkable, only twenty-five being in confinement, and these for very light offences. Equally satisfactory is the fact that the debtors' prison adjoining the Murate was absolutely empty.



On the Ponte Vecchio.

CHAPTER XIX.

Courts of Justice—Change in Criminal Laws—Trial by Jury—Former Laws—Spies in Florence—Laws in the Duchy of Modena—Neapolitans and Taxation—San Pancrazio—A Church in a new Dress—Chief Criminal Tribunal of Florence—Bearded Judges—Absent Jurors reproved—Trial for Manslaughter—The Crown Prosecutor and the Prisoner—Bullying System—Verdict—Applause in Court—Constitution of Jury—The Paris Police Courts—A Grisette and her Judge—Witnesses in Italy—Sicilian Dislike to giving Evidence.

ALTHOUGH Tuscany has experienced no change in the laws respecting capital punishment since her incorporation with the kingdom of Italy, a great change

has taken place in many of her criminal laws. Trial by jury is now universal, and the courts of justice are open to the public.

Formerly, in what some Codini pleasantly call the good old Grand Ducal days, the laws relating to the detection and punishment of crime were very inexpensive. All the complicated machinery of courts and judges, juries, crown prosecutors, and advocates for the prisoner, were dispensed with. A man frequently, whether guilty of a crime or only suspected, was arrested, tried, and condemned without the people being in any way informed on the subject; and what, maintain the Codini, was of even more consequence, entailing not half the expense on the country of open courts, trial by jury, &c. How pernicious this system was is well known. We could call many witnesses into court, to tell us how it worked in Florence; all of whom, though admitting that expensive judicial proceedings were avoided, agree in denouncing the system as having been in all respects subversive of honesty and morality.

It must be admitted, however, that the ancient *judicial régime* contained many more abuses in other parts of Italy than in Tuscany, where the comparatively good Leopoldine code of laws existed. There is, indeed, no doubt, paradoxical as it may appear, that

not unfrequently despotism and light taxation are coexistent. Thus the duchy of Modena was, perhaps, one of the most despotically-ruled districts in Europe, and yet few people were more lightly taxed than the Modenese. The Neapolitans, again, who cannot be said to have lived under a liberal government, when King Bomba was their ruler, were far less heavily taxed than they are at present. And so powerful is this taxation question in all arguments affecting the welfare of the lower classes, that the majority would probably prefer having a despotic and even impure government to one of a more liberal and enlightened nature, provided the former were accompanied by cheap bread, wine, and tobacco.

It is to be hoped, however, though there are doubtless some Italians under the rule of Victor Emmanuel who may complain, as indeed we know they do, of increased taxation, there are very few who would elect to go back to the days of closed courts of justice and spies.

It was somewhat startling, when on making enquiries for the chief criminal court of Florence, to be directed to the church of San Pancrazio; but probably a church on the retired list of ecclesiastical edifices cannot be put to better purposes than meting justice with equity. Be this as it may, San Pancrazio

is now the chief criminal tribunal in the capital of Italy; and precisely where the high altar stood, is now the bench of the judges, the prisoners' dock being against the north wall. Immediately behind the judges' bench rises a handsome screen, separating the body of the church from the apse. The screen is decorated by bundles of gilt fasces, surmounted by a bust of Victor Emmanuel, and the inscription,

'LA LEGGE È EGUALE PER TUTTI.

The other portions of this *ci-devant* church are extremely plain; all the ecclesiastical ornaments having, of course, been removed.

I attended a trial here on the day after the assizes commenced, being the second day that the court sat. On entering the building I found the judges—bearded men of mature age and fitting judicial mien—in the act of severely reprimanding some of the jurors, who, in consequence of non-attendance the previous day, had caused a trial to be postponed. 'They cannot be considered good citizens,' observed the presiding judge, 'who, being summoned to attend on juries, fail in performing their duty; and your conduct on this occasion,' he added, 'is the more reprehensible, as it is the first time that this high court of justice has been opened in Florence. You are now reprimanded

and admonished, but you will distinctly bear in mind that all cases of absence in future will be visited by the punishment of the legal fine of 300 francs for each day that you are absent.

The gentlemen of the jury to whom these remarks were addressed, looked very sheepish, and probably felt very much surprised; though they doubtless considered, with other juries, that it was rather hard that they should be called upon to sacrifice their business interests for patriotism.

The trial before the court was for manslaughter, arising out of a brawl in which several persons were concerned. Many knives were drawn and used. One man was killed, and others wounded. At a late period of the fray, the police appeared; but their endeavours to capture the ringleaders terminated in the rather inglorious apprehension of the prisoner at the bar, a mere boy, who was very unlikely to have slain the man in question. The trial was, however, conducted with all prescribed formalities, the lad being subjected to an examination by the crown prosecutor and judges under which many men of mature years might have quailed. But although the presiding judge and crown prosecutor did all in their power to persuade the jury that the prisoner was the person who had stabbed the deceased, it was an easy

task for the advocate who had undertaken the prisoner's defence, to show that in the struggle, imperfectly seen as it was by weak lamplight, it was impossible to ascertain with anything like positive certainty who had struck the fatal blow. And this was the opinion of the jury, who after a short absence from court, returned a verdict of Not Guilty.

This announcement was followed by applause from a considerable number of persons in court; the attempt to enforce silence by the officers in authority meeting but with very indifferent success; for Italians in the law courts, as well as in the higher court of Parliament, appear to consider that they have a perfect right to give expression to their feelings by applause or the reverse.

When the jury retired, I observed that two men remained in the box, twelve having gone out. Enquiring who these two persons were, I was informed that it is the custom to nominate fourteen on the jury, although only twelve act—the supplementary two being retained in case of sudden illness incapacitating any member of the jury from officiating.

It is really most distressing to an Englishman, accustomed to the glorious principle of British law, that assumes every one to be innocent until proved guilty, to be present at trials in France or Italy,

where the prisoner is exposed to a course of bullying and cross-examination under which many astute and strong-minded men would break down. On the continent, where trial by jury exists, the system appears to be the very reverse of ours, every ingenious argument and forensic method being employed to induce the prisoner to declare himself to be guilty. Not unfrequently, indeed, the judge and crown prosecutor go so far as even to draw an imaginative picture of the manner in which the supposed crime was perpetrated, and the motives that led to it.

If you visit the police courts in Paris, you will have abundant opportunities of seeing the working of this most unfair system. I remember hearing a case last year in that city, which filled me with indignation difficult to be suppressed. A young girl was brought before the police court, on the charge of stealing a pair of shoes. The shoemaker, at whose instance she had been arrested, swore that shortly after the girl had left his shop, he missed the shoes in question, and that when the girl was stopped in the street, a parcel which she carried, was found to contain not only a pair of boots that she had purchased, but also the shoes. He admitted that she had tried on several pairs of shoes as well as boots, but was positive that the boots alone had been pur-

chased. To this statement the girl gave emphatic contradiction, declaring that she had paid for the shoes as well as for the boots. But her protestations of innocence were entirely unheeded. With overbearing brutality, as it seemed to me, the police magistrate put a series of questions to her which might have been proper had the girl been charged with a flagrant crime, and proved to have led a dissipated life, but under the circumstances were quite irrelevant and unfair. And when the poor girl, confounded by the torrent of interrogatories, broke down under the pressure of cross-examination, the presiding magistrate proceeded to give the court his idea how the robbery had been committed, and of the motives that had led to it. 'Ah, I see how it was,' he almost shouted, rejoicing apparently in the law's triumph over the girl, 'you are good-looking, fond of dancing and of frequenting casinos, vain of your feet, and being desirous of showing them to the best advantage, stole the shoes. You are sentenced to —— weeks' imprisonment.'

Probably the former custom, of dispensing as much as possible with witnesses in criminal cases in Italy, which exists even now to some extent, arose from the very general dislike among Italians to bear witness

at all. This feeling is, however, much stronger in the south of the peninsula than in the north. Many travellers in Sicily will remember that the inhabitants of that island will not, if they can possibly avoid it, give any evidence, even in cases of murder. Doubtless as Italians become better acquainted with the new code of justice, and greater faith and confidence is felt in the Government, witnesses will not be so backward as they are now in telling 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,' and when this desirable state of things comes to pass, we shall probably see the Italian courts of justice more like our own.

CHAPTER XX.

The new Marriage Law in Italy—Palazzo Spini—Matrimonial Notices—Thunder of the Vatican—Marriage Fees—Hall of Marriage—Marriage made easy—Tuscan Wives—Voltaire's Advice respecting Marriage—Gilded Chairs and plain Contadini—Approving Cupids—Marriage Ceremony—Amazement of the newly Married—A lovely Peasant Girl—Result of a Lottery Ticket—Johnson's Advice respecting Lotteries—Giusti's Poem on the Lottery—The Lottery in Italy—Receipts from it—Retention of former Customs—A fortunate Terno—The Lottery in Florence and Rome.

ALL through the day, as you pass from the Ponte San Trinita to the piazza of that name, you will see crowds of people diligently reading notices suspended on boards under the windows of the old Palazzo Spini, now the municipality of Florence. To the fair sex especially, these notices appear to possess great interest, for there are generally several women perusing them earnestly; and taking into consideration the information they convey, we cannot be surprised, for they are notices of impending marriages.

By a recent law, all subjects of Victor Emmanuel, from the noble to the peasant, who purpose entering

into the holy state of matrimony, must have their names published, with the place of birth, age, profession or calling, and the Christian and surnames of their parents; the date of the intended marriage being added.* Thus, to many, these notices are of all-absorbing interest, and the girl who looks anxiously and hopefully to the day when she will become a matron, may well be excused for turning aside to read the announcement of her approaching marriage.

The law, too, enacts that all marriages shall be contracted by a civil process, it being optional to the parties to be married subsequently by a priest. As may be supposed, few laws that have emanated from the Government of the kingdom of Italy, have inflicted a more severe blow on the Church of Rome than this, and we cannot wonder that the Sacred College resented it strongly. The thunder of the Vatican rolled through the land when it was promulgated, the echoes being taken up by many pulpits. The peasantry were warned that marriages contracted under this law would not be recognised by the Church, and that children born of them would be illegitimate. Some persons of course were alarmed by this language, and although obliged to have

* A large majority of the women are described as *attendente alle cure domestiche.*

recourse to the civil authorities to be married, were careful to make the marriage religiously binding by a second ceremony in the church; but a large proportion of the people take no heed of their priest's remonstrances and threatened punishments, and feel no concientious scruples by being married in the municipality of their city or town. It is probable that the ready acceptance of this new law by the people has been in a great measure due to the circumstance, that no marriage fees, beyond the slight cost of a stamp, are exacted by Government. The new law, moreover, requires all marriages to be celebrated in public, at the municipality of the city or town; and as the ceremony is one of the sights of Florence, I determined on seeing it.

Was it with the view of making marriage very attractive, and full of future promise of happiness, that the Government have been at the expense of fitting up the 'Hall of Marriage,' as it is called, in the former Palazzo Spini, very handsomely? Matrimony, the best encourager of a useful population, has never been very popular in Tuscany. What a keen observer of human nature, and writer on the Florentines, said, may hold good still, 'The ease Tuscans find with the wives of others makes wives of their own unnecessary.' If this be true, you must not

expect them to eagerly follow Voltaire's advice, who recommends matrimony because 'si votre femme est belle, sage et raisonnable, vous serez un homme heureux; si elle est méchante ou coquette, vous deviendrez philosophe;—vous ne pouvez jamais qu'y gagner.'

Be this as it may, the upholsterer has expended much art on this Hall of Matrimony, and the result is an apartment which fairly astonishes plain contadini, who probably never beheld such finery before. It is, indeed, almost ludicrous to see their amazed expression when they are desired to sit on the gilded chairs covered with crimson silk, placed for the accommodation of those about to be united in wedlock. To look even on such grandeur would be considered a privilege, but for contadini to occupy such luxurious seats surpasses their comprehension. On one occasion I saw a couple fresh from their vineyard, the marks of toil strong on them, turn aside from these gilded chairs when invited to occupy them, and so impossible did it appear to their simple minds that they were to sit on them, that it was necessary for a clerk in attendance to almost force them into their appointed places.

There are eight of these grand chairs provided; they are disposed in two rows, the four in front

being arm-chairs, and more expensively got up than those at their back, which are armless. The ceiling of the apartment is ornamented with Venuses and Cupids, who look down with a very sweet expression of approval on the proceedings.

When the couples about to be married are seated, the witnesses occupying ordinary chairs on their right, the syndic, or his deputy, enters from an adjoining room, wearing round his waist a tri-coloured silk scarf, and taking his seat at a table opposite the candidates for matrimony, the ceremony commences. This consists in a clerk at a table on the right of the syndic reading, or gabbling rather, certain legal forms, which when I was present occupied about three minutes. A book was then placed before the syndic, the couples and witnesses signed their names, or, in cases of defective education, made marks, the syndic disappeared through the adjoining doorway, and the business was over; so quickly, too, that some newly-married couples stuck to their seats, evidently entirely unconscious that they had been made one; and it was only when the clerk said, in a loud voice, 'All is over, you may go,' that they began to realise the fact that they were indeed married.

Whether this civil marriage ends with the same

word as that terminating the marriage service of the Church of England, I cannot say, for the forms were read so indistinctly and fast, that I could only catch a few words here and there, but it is certain that amazement was depicted on the faces of several contadini when they were informed that they were married. The ceremony is certainly reduced to the minimum amount of simplicity, and, if no fee be exacted, the services rendered can scarcely be said to deserve an honorarium.

'What!' lady readers will perhaps exclaim, 'is there no blessing given, no pledging of troth, no bestowal of a ring, and no undertaking on the part of the man to worship the fair being at his side with his body, and to endow her with his worldly goods? No, my dear lady, nothing of the kind. And yet, believe me, that the Church, with all her power, cannot tie the nuptial knot in any country *faster* than it is tied by the civil law in the kingdom of Italy.

Generally speaking, the contadini seen here are not—probably from necessity—attired in garments at all in keeping with the splendour of the Marriage Hall. One day, however, that I happened to stroll into this Temple of Hymen, I was repaid by seeing a girl of great beauty, dressed in the most coquettish

manner, and loaded with heavy gold ornaments, while the man by her side to whom she was about to be united, had evidently been at great pains and expense in getting himself up for the occasion. Both, too, looked so supremely happy, glowing with young bright life, that you could come to no other conclusion than that the world had gone well with them; and so it had, or, to speak more correctly, fortune had smiled upon them in the shape of a fat prize which they had won in the Government lottery. Impatient to be married, they had, as I was informed, risked their savings on a *terno*, and, to their great joy, the numbers had been drawn. Looking at the young couple, you felt that, for once, fortune had been not only kind but just; yet amidst the pleasant feelings that their happiness awakened, misgivings for the future arose. Having been successful, would they not tempt fortune again? Such a prize as they had just grasped was not likely to make them follow Horace's advice—

. . . neu fluitem dubiæ spe pendulus horæ;

nor that of Johnson, who, in his remarkable paper on lotteries, says, 'Whoever finds himself inclined to anticipate futurity, and exalt possibility to certainty, should avoid every kind of casual adventure,

since his grief must be always proportionate to his hope.' But let us not anticipate a dark side to this picture, which exists in my remembrance as one of the brightest *tableaux vivants* seen in Florence.

It is greatly to be regretted that the Italian Government has not abolished the lottery. Unfortunately, this institution is so easy a method of swelling the attenuated exchequer,* that however opposed it may be to sound political economy, we cannot hope to see it yet put down. Napoleon I., greatly to his credit, gave orders for its suppression. 'I will have no lotteries or gambling-houses in Florence,' he declared; 'they are the ruin of families, and set a bad example. I tolerate gambling-houses in Paris, because they are of use to the police, but I will not allow them to exist in Florence.' †

The poet Giusti, who dearly loved his native Tuscany, severely censures the lottery in his poem

* The receipts from the lottery in the kingdom of Italy in 1865 were 19,494,200 francs, while those from the post-office only amounted to 13,500,000 francs.

† A very curious book entitled *Almanach Romain sur la Loterie Royale de France, par Menut de St.-Mesmin*, was published in 1830. It contains all the drawings of the French lottery from 1758 to 1830, and was largely used by those who believed they could predict future drawings from the past. Various sets of sympathetic numbers are given to help those disposed to try their fortune.

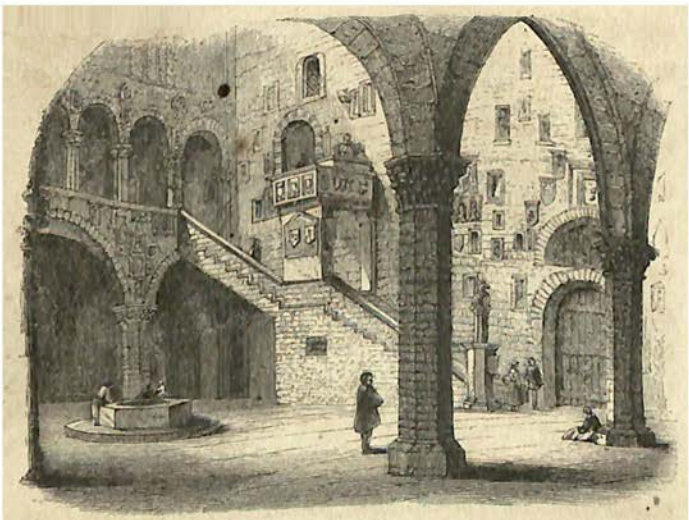
entitled 'Il Sortilegio.' Alluding to the ruin it entails on the peasantry, he says:—

> Ecco il lótto a ficcarsi tra loro,
> Il lótto, gioco Imperiále e Reále,
> E quella pace e quel viver onesto
> Subito in fumo andar con tutto il resto.

So popular is this institution in Tuscany, that the prizes retain their former scudo denomination, though this coin no longer exists. I became aware of this fact by a rather singular circumstance. Happening to mention the lottery one day, at my pension, I found, to my surprise, that the guests, who were rather numerous, had never heard of it. The effect of my information, was to send some gentlemen straightway to neighbouring lottery offices, where they purchased tickets. These turned out blanks, with one exception. This was a *terno*, the last ticket exposed for sale in one of the offices. One of the waiters having seen the ticket, the lottery had no sooner been drawn, and the numbers announced, than he rushed to the gentleman who had purchased the *terno*, and in a very excited manner, informed him that his numbers had come up, and that he had won so many scudi. 'Francs, you mean,' said the gentleman, looking at his ticket, which bore figures, without, however, specifying whether they applied to

francs or scudi. 'No, no, signor,' replied the waiter, who was well versed in all the mysteries of this gambling institution, 'you have won five times the amount you suppose.' And he was right, for on going to the office, the gentleman received a pocket-full of francs.

The lottery is drawn every Saturday; but although there are many offices for the sale of tickets, the institution is not as extensively patronised in Florence as it is in Rome.



Interior Court of the Bargello.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Bargello—Residence of the Podestà of Florence—Its History—Restoration—Giotto's Portrait of Dante—Its Mutilation—Royal Decree respecting the Bargello—Art Museum—The Art Treasures of Tuscany—Their great Excellence—Dealers' Tricks—The Collections in the Bargello—Ancient Well—Discovery of Human Bones—Instruments of Torture—Curious Iron Gates—Venetian Glass—A barbaric Turkish Ambassador—Ivory Saddles—Milan Armour—Curious Shield—Ancient Fire-arms—Revolvers—Cuirasses of Aluminium—Ecclesiastical Vestments—Dante's House—Mediæval Furniture—Cassones—Curious Coverlet—Old Pianos—Salvator Rosa's Harpsichord.

THOSE whose memories of Florence are associated with the late Grand Duke, will remember that

gloomy building in the Via del Proconsolo, nearly opposite the Badia Church, over the portal of which might have been appropriately inscribed the well-known words, seen by Dante in spirit over the gate of the 'città dolente.' Familiar to Florentines under the various names of Palazzo Pretorio, del Podestà, degli Anziana, della Giustizia, and del Bargello, it is the oldest palace in Florence, and has probably been the scene of more cruel and sanguinary proceedings than any other building in that city.

It was erected in 1255 for the residence of the Podestà, or chief magistrate of the Florentine republic, but in consequence of an extensive fire that occurred in 1332, and destroyed a considerable portion of the edifice, the existing Bargello retains few features of the original structure. But however much the antiquary may regret that the present building is not that of the thirteenth century, he cannot be disappointed by it, for it is justly considered to be one of the finest existing monuments of domestic mediæval architecture. And, if its stones could cry out, they would tell us amazing stories of far back years, when might was held to be right, and when unbridled ambition set its iron heel on the necks of men. For the history

of the Bargello belongs to those days when men observed—

> The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can.

The chronicles of this building appertain, indeed, to the most interesting and stirring period of Florentine history. With them, however, we have no further concern now, than to state that, after having served as the residence of the Podestà for many years, it was occupied by the Bargello, or captain of the police, and subsequently converted into a prison, and continued to be the principal penal establishment in Florence until 1859, when the prisoners were transferred to the Murate, and the restoration of the Bargello was commenced. Remembering the many instances where restoration is but another term for destruction, or, at all events, such wholesale alteration that the builders of the original edifice would not recognise their work, it is but right to state that the Bargello has been not only tenderly dealt with, but also restored in a most religious spirit and admirable manner. To this, however, an exception must, unhappily, be made. Giotto's frescoes, covering the east interior wall of the chapel, have been hopelessly destroyed. Long entombed

beneath a crust of whitewash, in some places nearly an inch thick, it was not until 1841 that any attempt was made to recover these paintings, and then, although their great interest was known in Florence —for among the frescoes were authentic portraits of Dante, Labini, Donati, and Giotto, minutely described by Villani in the fourteenth century—the task of bringing them once more to light was undertaken by Messrs. Kirkup and Wilde, the former an English, and the latter an American gentleman. But, unfortunately, they had no sooner commenced operations, than the municipality of Florence, jealous, apparently, that foreigners should interfere with their duties, undertook the work themselves, but with the most lamentable results. For, having entrusted the delicate task of removing the whitewash to injudicious hands, the frescoes were in the first instance considerably injured, and the so-called process of restoration ended in almost entirely changing their original character.

The destruction of a portion of Dante's portrait, painted by Giotto about 1298, when the poet was thirty-three years of age, is especially to be lamented. A nail that had been driven into the plaster was so clumsily torn out, that the right eye and a large portion of the fresco adjoining it were

destroyed. Marini was employed to repair the injury, and under the direction of Cavaliere Nerli, minister of public works, he painted an eye, with which he appears to have been so highly pleased, that he repainted the face and dress. Dante had been represented by Giotto in colours mentioned in the 'Purgatorio' as those worn by Beatrice—

> Sovra candido vel cinta d' oliva
> Donna m' apparve, sotto verde manto
> Vestita di color di fiamma viva;*

but as these were the colours of the revolutionary party when the portrait was repainted, it was resolved to change them into chocolate, red, and white; the hood with which Giotto had surmounted Dante's head being at the same time converted into a kind of turban.

To no artistic objects indeed do Mr. Ruskin's condemnatory remarks on restoration apply more forcibly than to these unfortunate frescoes. 'They are a lie from beginning to end;' and while we mourn over their desecration, we cannot but wonder at the same time that the Florentines, who profess to be jealous of Dante's fame, telling you that they

* In white veil, with olive wreath,
A lady appeared to me, beneath a green mantle,
Robed in colour of living flame.

hold his memory very dear, should have permitted this almost wanton outrage to have been perpetrated. Happily apprehending, with unfortunately too good reason, that these frescoes would be mangled, Mr. Kirkup made a very careful drawing of Dante's portrait as soon as it was exposed. This has been reproduced by the Arundel Society of London, and we are thus enabled to form a very good idea of Dante's features as Giotto painted them. With this exception, the restoration of the Bargello leaves nothing to be desired; and, fortunately, the purpose to which it was determined to apply it, is precisely of that nature which rendered it desirable that the building should be in no way altered. This was appropriating it for a museum of art treasures. With this view the following royal decree was published:—

'Considering that the Palazzo del Podestà has been restored to its primitive condition, and that it is one of the principal and most interesting monuments of Florentine history; considering, moreover, that many difficulties stand in the way of making use of this building for public offices, and that any alterations would totally destroy its historical interest, we hereby decree, that the Palace of the Podestà shall be destined from this time henceforth for the

reception of all kinds of ancient and mediæval monuments, illustrating the history of Tuscany, and throwing light on its institutions, manners, and arts. A special commission shall be appointed for the organisation and conservation of the museum. As soon as the commission has been appointed, private individuals shall be invited to contribute any objects that they may possess to the museum, either permanently or as loans.

'The Ministers of Justice and Public Instruction are herewith directed to carry this decree into effect.'

How full this scheme was of promise, became evident by an examination of the art treasures held in the house of Dr. Marco Guastalla in the Piazza del Independenza in 1861. This exhibition, organised for the benefit of the institution of the Asili Infantili, was most successful. The art treasures, a catalogue of which was kindly given to me by Dr. Guastalla, were extremely numerous and highly interesting, and the result, in a financial point of view, far exceeded the expectations of the promoters of the undertaking. Even the oldest residents in Florence were not aware of the great artistic wealth amidst which they lived. For the first time, many proprietors of ancient palaces, by contributing to the

collection, made the public acquainted with the treasures which they possessed.

Under Government influence, warmly patronised by the King and nobility of Tuscany, the success of the proposed national museum of art could not be doubtful, and as Tuscany abounded with interesting examples of mediæval art, it only required such a place as the Bargello to make the public familiar with them. But the scheme aimed at accomplishing another object of great importance. This was the preservation to Italy of her art treasures. For many years, as is well known, that country has furnished the museums of Europe with innumerable specimens of high art. Unconscious, apparently, of their value, and in many instances utterly indifferent respecting their possession, the owners of these treasures have frequently parted with them for very trifling sums. Those days are over. No longer can you hope to obtain a marvellous piece of metal-work in the form of a knocker, by making it the medium of summoning its owner, who was often willing to render you the happy possessor of it for a small piece of English gold; and such is the demand for art treasures in London and Paris, that it is impossible to obtain any object at all curious or excellent from the

dealers, without paying very long prices. It is true that in unfrequented parts of Italy you may occasionally meet a peasant, ignorant of the value of objects of antiquity, willing to allow you to supply him with a gaudy new piece of Birmingham metal-work, for a dingy and oxidised specimen of Benvenuto Cellini's cunning art; but such chances are very rare; more generally you will find, to your cost and vexation, that you are the victim in the transaction, for, after all your labour, you have only acquired a skilful example of forgery. Such cases are by no means imaginary. Among the many tricks of dealers in articles of vertu, the following is not unfrequently practised. A gentleman desirous of increasing his collection, is informed by a dealer that he has found in the house of a contadino in a retired part of the country, a very remarkable object of art, but that the latter is averse to parting with it, as the article has been in his family many years. The information, as may be supposed, not only excites the gentleman's curiosity, but also increases his covetous desire. So, after much praise from the dealer respecting the excellence of the art treasure, and the probable great difficulty in persuading the contadino to part with it, the gentleman and dealer visit the countryman,

who, being well instructed in his part, plays it admirably. The result of the adventure is obvious. Protesting, at first, that no money consideration will tempt him to part with his heirloom, his obduracy presently softens beneath the eloquence of the dealer, until at length he consents, for a sum infinitely above the value of the article, to surrender it to the gentleman visitor, who is of course delighted by his acquisition. Let us hope no unkind chance blasts his happiness, by making him aware that the acquired object was the property of the dealer, who cunningly enhanced its value, in the estimation of the collector, by placing it in the house of the contadino, who, for a small remuneration, was willing to father the article.

But although tricks like these are played, not only in Florence, but in other cities in Italy, there is, at the same time, no doubt that genuine art treasures may occasionally be obtained, their possessors being either in want of money, or not able to resist the temptation of very large offers for them; and, unfortunately for Italy, when they are parted with, they almost invariably leave the country. Look at the amazing number of examples of Italian art in our Kensington Museum, all of which are of comparatively recent acquisition; and remember, too,

that there are many greedy, and very wealthy, collectors always adding to their already large stores.

It was not unreasonable, therefore, to hope that, if a national collection of mediæval art were formed, with which a loan exhibition might be combined, some influence would, in all probability, be exercised on those persons possessing collections of this kind; for, by showing that they are highly appreciated by the public, their owners might be less disposed to allow them to leave the country. For while the possessor of a remarkable art treasure, unknown to all but himself and a few friends, might be willing to sell it to a foreigner, if its existence were generally known, pride, if no nobler feeling were aroused, would very likely cause the owner of the treasure to turn a deaf ear to any proposition to part with it.

In the absence of a catalogue, it is extremely difficult to attempt even to give a just idea of the treasures already accumulated in the old Bargello. Unfortunately, too, the want of this most important and necessary document to the right understanding of a collection, is the more to be lamented, from the circumstance, that while the objects have tickets attached to them, bearing in large characters the names and titles of their owners, frequently of imposing length, the objects are left wholly undescribed.

This want was, fortunately, in my own case, on more than one occasion, admirably supplied by a member of the Royal Commission, who combines, in a very remarkable manner, the erudition of a profound antiquary with refined artistic taste.

All the halls and rooms, excepting those on the ground floor, and the vast council-chamber, on the first, are filled with art treasures. Passing into the great central inner court, the walls of which are covered with curious and often fantastic coats of arms, in stone, of the various Podestàs, attention is arrested by a highly interesting collection of early stone sculpture, disposed under the arcade round the court. Here, too, are some magnificent specimens of Della Robbia, one bearing an inscription stating it to have been executed by Andrea de Robia (*sic*) MDXXI. The ancient well remains in the middle of the courtyard. A vast quantity of human bones were found at the bottom, remains, it is alleged, of some of the many unhappy victims of the iron rule of the period in which they lived. A few of the bones bore marks of violence, arising, as is thought, from torture, to which the limbs of the poor wretches had been subjected. For, when the Bargello was restored, a torture-chamber, similar in many respects to that at Nuremberg, was discovered, with various

instruments of torture, diabolically contrived to inflict intense agony, and yet not to entirely extinguish life. All these were burnt, or otherwise destroyed; and though the exhibition of them would doubtless pander, in some degree, to a morbid curiosity, it is to be regretted that such historical relics of the past should not have been preserved and included in the mediæval collection.

Ascending the stairs from the courtyard, we pass through curious iron gates elaborately wrought, covered with small bosses of the same metal, each of which is carved in the form of a human head, and enter the rooms on the first floor. Some of these are occupied by art treasures removed from the Uffizi, consisting of gems, ivories, bronzes, majolica, &c. which were contained in the room opening from the Hall of the Hermaphrodite. In that apartment they were so crowded, that it was extremely difficult to see them satisfactorily; and the same remark applies to other objects, also transferred from the Uffizi to the Bargello. Here, too, for the first time, is seen to advantage the wonderful piece of majolica inherited by the Medici from the Duke of Urbino, and the Venetian glass; of such great beauty, that you are more than ever disposed to regard that Turkish Ambassador as a barbarian of the lowest caste, if it

be true that he ordered vessels like these to be broken; but as you may not have heard the story, here it is. At the close of one of their numerous wars with Turkey, the Venetians resolved on making a present to the Ambassador from the Porte appointed to visit the republic. It was at the period when Venice had carried the art of manufacturing glass to the highest perfection. The republic, not unnaturally, believed that they could not offer a more acceptable or beautiful present to the Ambassador, than a dinner-service of this exquisite glass. Accordingly, several pieces were manufactured, and when the time arrived for making the present, the service was laid out in the most effective manner on a table in the hall appointed to receive the Ambassador. The latter, having heard of the proposed gift, gave a member of his suite instructions to sweep down, as if by accident, some of the pieces with his cloak as he passed down the hall. The order was obeyed; and as the glass fell, crashing to the ground, regrets were loud on the part of the Venetians, at what they considered to be so unfortunate an accident. Then, turning to the Ambassador, who contemplated the wreck with stoical silence, they were about expressing their sorrow that the present intended for his Excellency should have

been thus spoiled, when the Turk, with an air of supreme contempt, observed, 'Had the dishes been gold, they would not have been broken by the fall;' implying that, if the service had been of this precious metal, it would have been sold to satisfy the greed, and probable need, of the Ambassador.

Here is a wonderful collection of leather objects, beautifully embossed, ranging in date from the years 1300 to 1700; ivory saddles highly carved, and decorated with battle and other scenes exquisitely engraved on the ivory; but certainly more curious in appearance than useful as saddles, and equally uncomfortable, we should say, to man and beast. The collection of armour, as might be expected, is particularly fine, including a great variety from Milan, manufactured, for the most part, when the milliner set the fashion for arms and armour, spurs and saddles, furbelows and farthingales, corsets and corslets, fans and falchions, furnishing equally the lady with the ornaments destined to increase her charms, and the knight with the panoply in which he displayed his prowess before her.

> Well was he armed, from head to heel,
> In mail and plate of Milan steel.

Shields, several, said to be by Benvenuto Cellini—though if only one half of those attributed to that cunning worker in metals were really his handiwork,

he must have laboured like a very Vulcan—others, bearing the date of 1540, having lanterns attached to them, with a small hole in the centre of the shield through which the muzzle of a pistol protrudes; helmets, many exquisitely wrought, some so ponderous, that it is difficult to lift them; cuirasses of crushing weight,* and a bewildering display of damascened armour. Among the fire-arms, are those which belonged to the celebrated Bandi Neri, and guns and pistols made in the sixteenth century, furnished with from six to thirty revolving barrels, extremely similar in construction to modern revolvers. Several so-called novel inventions in the art of slaughter, take us back in many respects to the weapons of the middle ages. Gorgeous stained-glass, finger and ear-rings, rich and rare jewels, and an infinite variety of objects in amber of great size and beauty, contributed by the King. There are also mediæval ivories, coins, seals, medals, illuminated missals, one especially of marvellous beauty, belonging to the Arcispedale of Santa Maria Novella, the text being gold on a purple ground, with margins of exquisite beauty, and a great variety of richly jewelled crosses and croziers.

* These contrast curiously with the helmets and cuirasses of aluminium manufactured for some Italian cavalry regiments for use during the last war: the cuirasses are as light as an ordinary coat.

With commendable taste, the chapel is appropriated to the display of gorgeous bishops' robes, copes, stoles, and other ecclesiastical vestments, contained in a large case erected against the north wall. But rich and curious as these are, they pale in interest by the side of Dante's portrait, which, even in its mutilated state, commands instant and undivided attention. Like the neighbouring Casa di Dante,* which, although retaining few traces of antiquity, is still dear to Italy as the spot of the poet's birth, the portrait appeals more to the mental than to the physical eye, but nevertheless we must regard it as one of the most interesting objects in the Bargello.

Are you curious respecting the domestic life of the ancient Florentines? you may gratify your curiosity to a considerable degree, for here are various specimens of mediæval furniture, which did duty in the palaces of Florence in Medicean days, richly-carved bedsteads, wardrobes and cabinets, with cunningly-contrived partitions and drawers, many opening on touching hidden springs; chairs covered with embossed leather, a great number of cassones, their sides painted by eminent artists, in which the *trousseaux* of Italian brides were con-

* The name of the street containing this house has been changed. It is now called Via Martina. The house bears this inscription:

In questa Casa degli Alighieri nacque il Divino Poeta.

tained, the paintings, in many cases, being of far greater value now, than were their most costly contents; curious coverlets, quilted in relief, supposed to have been made about the end of the fourteenth century; one representing the history of the Knights of the Round Table, and the exploits of King Arthur. This ancient relic is considered unique, and of such interest, that it is intended to publish exact copies of all the figures.

Here, too, are pianos, the soul of harmony long departed from their antiquated bodies, but nevertheless of great artistic value, the exterior of their cases being covered with exquisite paintings. The greatest masters not unfrequently bestowed excessive pains on the decoration of these instruments. It is stated in the 'Life of Salvator Rosa,' that when living in Florence, he was found one day by a visitor strumming on a jingling old harpsichord. 'How can you, a man of taste, and loving music as you do,' said the latter, 'keep such an instrument in your house? Why 'tis not worth a scudo!' 'Come, come,' replied the painter, 'you must not run down my harpsichord thus. I will lay you what you please that it will be worth one thousand scudi before you see it again. A bet was made, and Salvator forthwith painted charming landscapes with figures on the outside of the cover, and on the end

a skull and music-books. The instrument, thus embellished, sold for one thousand scudi, and the paintings were considered masterpieces.*

From these brief notes of the contents of this new museum, it will be seen that, although but a few months in existence, it already takes high rank among museums of a similar nature in Europe; and as the loan department will always form one of the chief and most attractive features, there is no doubt that, as its objects become better known, the proprietors of important collections in distant parts of the kingdom, will place their treasures at the disposal of the Royal Commissioners for exhibition. But even should it receive few accessions, it will be well worth visiting, and as one of the novelties of Florence, it has been considered desirable to give some account of it here.

* They have been exhibited at the British Institution.

Florentine Fleur-de-lis, on wall in Chapel of Bargello.

CHAPTER XXII.

Re-discovery of Dante's Remains at Ravenna—Commission appointed to Report on the Circumstances connected with the Discovery—Difficulty in obtaining a Copy of the Document—An obliging Official—Dante's Statue in Florence—Preface to the Report—Names of the Royal Commissioners—Their Instructions—Dante's Tomb—Epitaph—Guido Novello—His Patronage of Dante—Manner of Dante's Death—His Burial—Attempt to Excommunicate and Burn his Remains—Preservation of them by certain Florentines—Endeavour to Remove them to Florence—Michael Angelo's offer to Design a Cenotaph for them—Dispute between the Frati Minori of Ravenna and the Municipality of that City—Removal of the Poet's Remains from their original Sepulchre—Extraordinary Discovery of a wooden Chest containing Dante's Bones—Inscriptions on the Chest—Identification of these with Frate Santi—Anatomical Examination of the Bones—Proved to be those of Dante—Description of his Skull—Exhibition of the Remains—Boccaccio's Description of Dante—Great Interest of this Discovery—Codici of Dante's immortal Work.

DEEPLY interesting as was the discovery of Dante's portrait on the wall of the chapel in the Bargello, it is surpassed by the more recent extraordinary rediscovery of the poet's remains at Ravenna. The intelligence of this event, which took place in May 1865, created great sensation at the time. The

public press made the fact known throughout Europe, and the Italian Government, with proper appreciation of its importance, appointed a commission to inquire into, and report on, all the circumstances connected with the discovery.

Before, however, adverting to this report, it will not be uninteresting to relate the incidents connected with my obtaining possession of a copy of this document. They illustrate, in a remarkable manner, the interest taken in literary and archæological matters in the new capital of Italy.

Having heard that the report in question had been printed, I made enquiries for it shortly after my arrival in Florence. Although these did not immediately lead to any practical result, I supposed that I had not gone to the proper quarters, though it might reasonably be apprehended that every person in Florence of even moderate education, would be more or less acquainted with the labours and results of such a commission as this. But when applications to gentlemen holding high official appointments, including the secretary of the municipality of Florence, were equally fruitless, astonishment was added to disappointment.

As a matter of course, I expected to find the document at Vieussieux's extensive and excellent

library; but it was not there, and what was even more surprising, no copy existed at the national library. The librarian, with a courtesy always extended by him to visitors, obligingly placed before me all the publications having reference to the great Dante festival held at Florence last year, numbering upwards of one hundred, but the report I sought was not among them, nor, more extraordinary still, did he, or any of the assistants, know anything respecting it.

As time wore on, the circle of my acquaintance in Florence became widely extended, and accordingly, whenever opportunity offered, I made searching enquiries for the document in question, the hunt for which now became positively exciting. From Florentines generally, you would not perhaps expect much enlightenment, for, as a rule, they are no book-worms; the lines—

> My only books
> Were women's looks,

apply to a large majority of Florentine gentlemen, but whether with the result caustically added by the poet in the line following those quoted—which, however, shall not be cited—is a psychological question into which we need not now enquire. This, however, may be said; the young, ay, and even

middle-aged Florentine, who has not forgotten his Virgil, is far more likely to know more of a lady's toilette, from the mystery of a cunningly-inwoven chignon to her chaussure, than of *Il Divina Poeta*, or of his immortal poem.

I did expect, however, information on the subject of my enquiries from men, who, being the, so to say, 'potent, grave, and reverend signiors' of the State, might naturally be supposed to take an interest in all that related to their chief poet. But disappointment was still my fate, and I was just about abandoning the search as hopeless, when the apparently authentic information was imparted to me, that the Report had been presented to the Minister of Public Instruction, and had been printed by that department of Government. Acting on this, I procured a letter to the Minister's secretary, and repaired to his office. But his secretaryship had gone to Turin with his chief —a not uncommon answer, by the way, given you at Florence last winter, when you wanted to see Government officers, as the official links between the two cities were not then entirely broken—and his deputy had gone to breakfast—it was 12 o'clock. A few days after I called in the afternoon. The chief secretary had not returned from Turin, the deputy had left the office for the day. A third visit was

equally unsuccessful—the Fates were evidently against me. But I was determined not to be foiled, and the more so, as I had received further information tending to convince me that the Report with which I longed to make acquaintance, was within the halls of the Minister of Public Instruction. But where, was the question; and as these halls are both numerous and vast,* it became evident that a long time might be spent going fruitlessly from office to office in the building, unless provided with a clue.

Such was the condition of affairs, when, on the occasion of my fourth visit, the secretary being still absent, a pretty close scrutiny of the porter's face, who had answered my enquiries respecting the officials, led me to make my wants known to him. Apprised of these, he proceeded to inform me that he thought there was a gentleman in an office on the upper floor of the building who might be able to give me precise information. Accordingly, furnished with his name, I proceeded to his office. He was, fortunately, at his desk, and received me very courteously. To my question as to the existence of the document I was in search of, he informed

* The building now occupied by the Minister of Public Instruction in Florence, was formerly one of the largest convents in that city.

me that it did exist, but only in manuscript. 'Could I see the manuscript?' 'Yes;' and ringing his bell, he instructed the porter, who appeared, to fetch a certain bundle of papers from an inner room. The man soon returned with them. 'Here,' said my friend—for as such I was disposed to regard him —'is the Report; but you see it is, as I stated, in manuscript.' I looked rather hopelessly at the formidable mass of papers, thinking of the labour that an examination of them would involve, and the more so, as the caligraphy was neither large nor clear. I was, however, just on the point of asking permission to examine the documents, when the gentleman, who had been turning the papers over, came to a printed document, on opening which he exclaimed, 'Ah, you are right, here is the Report printed. But,' he added, disappointingly, 'there is but this copy, and therefore I am sorry I cannot present you with one.' His kindness encouraging—from all Florentine officials you will be almost sure to meet great courtesy—I ventured to remark that, as the Report was extremely interesting, it was probable that several copies had been printed, and that perhaps further search might disclose their existence. A second time was the bell rung, and on the porter's appearing, he was desired to look

for printed copies of the Report, the copy among the papers being shown to him as a guide. He returned in a few minutes with a bundle of them under his arm. The gentleman, after paying me the compliment of stating that again I was right, presented me with a copy; and those who have been engaged in a long hunt for a rare book, which has resulted in finding it on perhaps a small bookstall in an obscure street, will best appreciate my satisfaction when I became possessed of the Report, a translation of the principal portions of which is subjoined. And if my readers share the general opinion respecting the great interest of the document, they will admit it is most extraordinary that its existence should not have been known in Florence, at least by the educated classes, among many of whom my enquiries were made. We might almost be disposed to believe that Byron's lines—.

> Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar,
> Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore!

are still applicable to the citizens of the poet's native town. For what boots it erecting a colossal monumental statue* of the immortal author of the

* *A propos* of this statue—one of Pazzi's most successful works—I may remark that, all through the past winter, it was surrounded,

'Divina Commedia,' if they are entirely ignorant of facts which should stir them deeply. It is right to add, that although the Report bears the date of the 12th of June 1865, it was not printed until the close of that year; and, moreover, that it has not passed through a publisher's hands.

Let us now turn to the Report itself. It is thus prefaced:—

'Referring to the solemn and almost miraculous re-discovery of the remains of Dante on the 27th of May 1865, the Minister of Public Instruction, by command of His Majesty the King of Italy, hereby declares and appoints Commendatore Conte Giovanni Gozzadini, Conte Rasponi, Syndic of Ravenna, Commendatore Vanucci, Commendatore Professore Guiliani, Cavaliere Professore Paganucci, and Conte Cappi, Librarian of the Public Library of Ravenna, to be His Majesty's Commissioners, and further appoints Conte Gozzadini, President of the said Commission.

'These are to act in concert with the municipality of the city of Ravenna, which was a loving mother

and almost entirely hidden, by scaffolding; nor did I ever perceive any signs of labour within the hoarding. But we should be slow to criticise our neighbours in their art matters, seeing that our metropolitan Nelson monument remains unfinished.

to the Alighieri family in the season of trouble and distress. And they are, moreover, hereby desired to draw up a Report of their labours, preceded by a copy of their official instructions.'

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED TO ENQUIRE INTO, AND VERIFY, THE FACTS RELATING TO THE RE-DISCOVERY OF THE BONES OF DANTE.

To collect, as far as possible, all information, whether written or traditional, relating to Dante's sepulchre, and to the incidents connected with the burial or removal of his remains, between the years 1321 and 1677 inclusive.

To ascertain whether the bones of Dante were removed, in 1677, from the sepulchre in which they were deposited by the Frati Minori; and, if this was the case, to discover the locality to which they were conveyed.

To examine, with great minuteness, the wooden chest in the Braccioforte sepulchral chapel said to contain Dante's bones; particularly for the purpose of ascertaining whether the chest bears any marks by which it may be referred to the year 1677, or to any other year.

To ascertain, as far as possible, whether the human bones in the aforesaid chest are such as might have belonged to a man who ceased to live at the age when Dante died, and to examine, with great minuteness, the cranium, and compare it with the cast taken from the mask of Dante, bequeathed by the Marquis Torrigiani to the city of Florence, and preserved in the Royal Uffizi Gallery.

The Commissioners are, moreover, invited and authorised to make any further investigations, within or without the aforesaid sepulchral chapel, which may be at all likely to throw further light on the particular subject of this enquiry, due care being at the same time taken that no investigations be made without the full concurrence of the municipality of the city of Ravenna.

Such were the instructions furnished to the Commissioners. They executed the interesting task confided to them with zeal and discretion, and here is the result of their labours :—

REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED TO VERIFY THE FACTS CONNECTED WITH THE RE-DISCOVERY OF THE BONES OF DANTE.

The Commissioners appointed to examine and verify the facts connected with the re-discovery of Dante's bones, assembled on the morning of the 6th of June 1865, in Ravenna, when they were most courteously received by the honourable municipality of that city, all the members of the municipality testifying the most ardent desire to assist their enquiries by every means in their power.

All authorities concur in stating, that Dante Alighieri died in the city of Ravenna on the 14th of September 1321, and that he was honourably interred in *arca lapidea*, near the church of the Frati Minori; the epitaph attributed to Giovanni del Virgilio, which has been repro-

duced with others of a later date, having been placed over his tomb.*

This sepulchre, erected by Guido Novello da Polenta, appears to have been only provisional, as it was intended to replace it by another, in all respects more worthy to contain the remains of the divine poet; but Guido having been expelled from Ravenna, and dying young, was unable to carry out his noble intentions. †

* This epitaph is as follows: 'I have sung the rights of monarchy and those of superior worlds. I have sung the scenes of the infernal regions, ideally seen, so far as the Fates have permitted me. But as that spiritual part of myself will happily, as I trust, occupy another and a better world than this, ascending to its divine Author, I, Dante Alighieri, exiled from my native city, Florence—a mother without love—am buried here.'

† Guido Novello was a person of great consequence in Ravenna, and occupied one of the largest palaces in that city. When Dante was expelled from Florence, he offered the poet an asylum in his house, and became his firm friend; though, unfortunately, this friendship was indirectly the cause of the poet's death. Having great confidence in Dante's diplomatic abilities, Novello requested him to go to Venice, and negotiate a peace with the Venetians, who were preparing for hostilities against Ravenna. Dante acceded to the request; but, being unable to procure an audience, he returned to Ravenna by land; apprehending that he might be intercepted by the Venetian fleet, had he attempted to go back by sea. The mortification of having failed in his endeavour to preserve Ravenna and his generous patron from impending danger, and the fatigue of the journey—undertaken during the fervent heat of summer—threw Dante into a fever, which terminated his existence. He died in the palace of his friend, who bitterly mourned his death, and evinced the most tender regard for his memory. He had a cast taken of his face, and caused the body of the poet, surrounded by various appropriate designs, to be carried in state, on a bier, through the principal streets of Ravenna; after which it was de-

Under these circumstances, in 1483, Bernardo Bembo, at that period prætor in Ravenna for the republic of Venice, ordered Pietro Lombardi to make a marble monument in honour of the poet, the front of which bore a basso-relievo of Dante, surmounted by a new epitaph. The ravages of time having greatly injured this monument, it was restored and redecorated in 1692, at the expense of the city of Ravenna, by the instigation of the Florentines, Domenico Maria Corsi, Cardinal Legate of Emilia, and Giovanni Salviati, pro-Legate. Lastly, in 1780, the Cardinal Legate, Luigi Valenti Gonzaga, ordered a small temple to be erected over the tomb, in which the sculpture by Pietro Lombardi is preserved.*

This simple history of Dante's first tomb, gave rise to a long discussion, with the view of testing its accuracy, and eliciting, if possible, further details.

posited in a marble sarcophagus, prepared by himself. Tiraboschi includes Novello among the poets of his time. It seems strange that he should have sacrificed his daughter in the manner he did, by marrying her, under a deception, to the deformed Lanciotto Malatesta.

* This is the existing edifice. It is square in form, surmounted by a small dome, internally decorated with stucco ornaments, indifferently executed. The bas-relief of the poet represents him sitting at a desk with a book, surmounted by a crown of laurel, and the motto

Virtuti et honori.

Before this tomb Chateaubriand knelt bareheaded. Byron deposited on it a copy of his works. And Alfieri, after having prostrated himself, wrote that beautiful ode, commencing

O gran padre Alighier, se dal ciel miri!

None, however, of any great moment, were brought to light.

How long the poet's remains, which were assuredly deposited with great care in the first tomb prepared for them by Guido Novello, remained in their resting place, is uncertain. It is probable, however, that a few years subsequent to 1321, they were privately removed, prior to the arrival in Ravenna of Cardinal Bertrando del Poggetto, legate of Pope John XXII., at Bologna, who had come for the avowed purpose of barbarously disinterring, excommunicating, and burning the remains of Dante.* These projects were, however, happily frustrated by the Florentines Pino della Tosa, and Ostagio da Polenta, who boldly came forward as champions of Dante's fame. When the apprehensions arising from Pope John's designs had subsided, the remains of Dante were probably replaced in the mausoleum erected for them by Bernardo Bembo, in which they remained until fresh alarms for the safety of the precious relics, which shed lustre on their convent, induced the friars of San Francisco to again remove them.

This removal took place in 1519, at which period the Florentines petitioned Pope Leo X. to exercise

* And the poet's tract on Monarchy, the Commissioners might have added, for such were the Cardinal's instructions from the Pope.

his Papal authority to cause Dante's remains to be transferred to their city; and as this pope was a Florentine, and a member of the powerful house of the Medici, and Michael Angelo had, moreover, offered to erect a suitable monument in an honourable locality to the poet in Florence,* the friars of San Francisco had the more reason to apprehend that the remains of Dante would be abstracted.

Whether the latter were replaced in the sepulchre restored by Cardinal Corsi seems to be questionable, for it appears that fierce quarrels prevailed between the Frati Minori and the commune of Ravenna, respecting jurisdiction over the tomb. The enmity between these bodies was so great, that when the commune wished to restore the sepulchre, they were under the necessity of sending thirty-two policemen to protect the workmen engaged in the task. Thus protected, the sepulchre was finally completed in 1692. It then appears to have been securely closed, encircled by an iron railing, and the key of the door

* A petition in Latin, to the above effect, drawn up by the Medicean Academy, was addressed to the Beatissime Pater Leone X., and signed by nineteen members of the Academy. Opposite Michael Angelo's signature are these words:

Io Michelagnolo Scultore il medesimo a vostra Santita supplico offerendomi al divin Poeta fare la Sepultura sua con decente, e in loco onorevole in questa Citta.

committed to the keeping of the heads of the commune. And, in order to assert their jurisdiction over the chapel containing the sepulchre, they caused the following inscription to be placed over the door:—

S. P. Q. R. jure et ære suo tamquam thesaurum suum munivit, instauravit, ornavit.

But, although the friars were, in this instance, defeated, they refused to acknowledge the supremacy of the commune of Ravenna, and stoutly maintained that the tomb of Dante was their exclusive property, their establishment having, as they stated, been granted the ground on which it stood in 1261 by the Archbishop Filippo Fontana, with the adjoining houses and gardens. They further appealed to Rome against the commune of Ravenna, alleging that the latter, by restoring the mausoleum, had violated their rights and ecclesiastical privileges. The question became still more involved in 1692, when a prisoner, with two accomplices, having escaped from prison, fled to the mausoleum, and, grasping the iron railing encircling it, claimed right of sanctuary. But the prisoner having been seized by the police, and recommitted to prison, a question of privilege was raised, and referred to the Council

of Ecclesiastical Immunity in Rome. The latter consulted Archbishop Raimondo Ferretti, who replied, on the 9th of August 1694, that Dante, having been declared a heretic after his death, his burial-place, though originally sacred, was now undoubtedly polluted, and consequently no longer possessed the privilege of sanctuary. The friars, in their turn, endeavoured to upset this decision, by affirming that the chapel did not contain Dante's bones. But the archbishop would not allow this to be any reason why the tomb should be entitled to ecclesiastical immunity. Be this as it may, it is evident that the friars were greatly interested in keeping the remains of Dante rigidly concealed, apprehending that they might fall into unsafe and unworthy hands. It also further appears that, in 1780, when Cardinal Valenti Gonzaga erected the superstructure of the small temple of Pietro Lombardi, the tomb was solemnly opened, in order to ascertain whether it contained Dante's remains. The result of the examination is by no means clear, for, according to the obscure language of a contemporary historian, 'there was found that which made doubt no longer necessary' (*vi si rinvenne ciò che era necessario per non dubitarne*)—words which admit of two interpretations. How-

ever, it is to be observed, that constant traditions maintained that Dante's bones were no longer in his sepulchre; and this is confirmed by a manuscript note lately found in a book, which there is evidence to prove was written at the close of the last century. This note states that, at that period, the tomb of Dante was opened, and that nothing was found within. Information of this negative nature is most unsatisfactory, and if no steps were subsequently taken to verify the statement, it is to be explained from the probable unwillingness to accept as certain so painful a truth.*

Happily, however, we now pass from this region of doubt, and are able to cast clear light on the remainder of our interesting history.

* Although the authorities of Ravenna—civil as well as ecclesiastical—had doubtless been long aware that Dante's bones were not in their original resting-place, it is certain that such has not been the belief of the public generally. Histories, and all descriptions of 'guides,' make mention of Dante's remains in connection with the poet's original sepulchre. Byron, who was a devoted worshipper of Dante, believed firmly that they laid here undisturbed. 'Dante,' says the author of 'Childe Harold,' was buried (in sacra Minorum æde) at Ravenna, in a handsome tomb, where his bones remain.' And in 'Don Juan' he writes:—

> I pass each day where Dante's bones are laid:
> A little cupola, more neat than solemn,
> Protects his dust; but reverence here is paid
> To the bard's tomb, and not the warrior's column.

The city of Ravenna having resolved on celebrating the sixth centenary of Dante's birth, good fortune brought a circumstance to light which created a great sensation, and the more so, as it occurred only a few days before the inauguration of the monument erected to the poet's honour in Florence.

With the view of increasing the interest in Dante's tomb, the municipality of Ravenna determined on removing the wall adjoining the chapel of Braccioforte. By its removal the tomb would become isolated, and thus better seen. Accordingly, the work of demolition was commenced on the 27th of May, 1865, and had not been long in progress, when, from a recess within a closed door in the wall, tumbled a rude wooden chest, which, flying open as it came to the ground, disclosed human bones, and inscriptions on the inner, as well as outer, sides of the chest, to the effect that the remains were those of Dante.

The discovery having been communicated to the authorities of Ravenna, a searching examination was made of the chest and its contents, and these having been carefully noted, the chest was confided to the charge of a detachment of the National Guard, with whom it remained until the Royal Commissioners went to Ravenna. Before, however, proceeding to

examine the chest and its contents, the Commissioners resolved on having the ancient sepulchre of Dante opened. This was effected on the morning of the 7th of June, in the presence of the Syndic of Ravenna, and all the municipal authorities of that town, together with a deputation of those of Florence.

The result was, that the tomb was only found to contain, according to the evidence of the chief surgeon, Cavaliere Giovanni Puglioli, and Doctor Claudio Bertozzi, two phalanges of a human hand, and one of a foot, with some fragments of laurel leaves, mingled with organic remains in a state of powder. The bones and the latter substances were carefully collected, and placed by the Syndic of Ravenna in the hands of the President of the Commission, in order that they might be submitted to more detailed examination and to chemical analysis; and the sepulchre was then carefully closed.

The comparatively unimportant results arising from the examination of this tomb, which occupied from eight o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon, rendered it the more necessary to make a careful examination of the bones discovered on the 27th of May, in the chest. Accordingly, on the 11th of June, in the presence of the same parties who had

witnessed the opening of the sepulchre, the chest and bones found within it were submitted to a most careful examination, with the following results.

The chest was of such rude workmanship, as to render it evident that it had been made by a person wholly unskilled in the art of carpentry; one of the sides measured 77·5 centimètres, while the opposite side, which should have been of the same length, only measured 74·8 centimètres. The two inscriptions were not cut in the centre of the superficies of the sides of the chest, but were placed in irregular positions. That on the outside is as follows:—

DANTIS OSSA
a me Frë Antonio Santi
hic posita
Año 1677 die 18 Octobris.

The other inscription within the chest runs thus: —

DANTIS OSSA
Denuper revisA [*sic*] die 3ª Junii
1677.

The first inscription is in larger characters than the second, but the letters are not so deeply cut; both inscriptions, however, have evidently been

graven by the same hand. The characters of the two inscriptions were also found to be, in almost all respects, similar to those in a book written by the same Fre. Antonio Santi, preserved in the archives of the municipality. The identity of the characters is very apparent in the small, as well as large letters, but especially in the D's, which in the book, as also in the inscriptions within and without the side of the chest, are according to three experts from Bologna, Bergamo, and Ravenna, skilled in writing, the work of the same hand.

Thus we have the strongest evidence that Italy is indebted to this Frate Santi for the preservation of Dante's remains; for he it was who, at a time of impending danger, placed the precious bones in a locality where they would be safe.

The Commissioners were, therefore, very naturally, extremely desirous of ascertaining who this Frate Santi was. Their researches, which were long and laborious, showed that his parents were Leonardo and Elisabetta Ingoli; that he was born on the 3rd of August 1644, in Ravenna; became a member of the Frati Minori, and that in 1677, when he placed the chest within the wall, he was Chancellor of the convent of San Francisco. The archives of this establishment contain his official signature as

Chancellor to capitulary documents between 1672 and 1679. Subsequently, Frate Santi was elected guardian, or head of his convent.*

The Commissioners are desirous of drawing especial attention to the fact, that between the 19th of May and the 20th of June 1677, and between the 3rd and 20th of October of the same year, there are no official records showing that the chapter of the convent met during those periods; and they deduce from this fact the inference, that the abstraction of Dante's remains from their original sepulchre, and the depositing of them in their new resting-place, were secrets known only to Santi and a few other persons; the more likely to be kept, as no meetings of the chapter were held at the time when the poet's remains were removed.

We now come to one of the most interesting portions of the Report, the examination of the bones found in the chest. This appears to have been made with great care and skill, the Commissioners having had the assistance of the highest available anatomical authorities.

The bones, they state, are those of a robust adult male, rather advanced in manhood. Exteriorly they

* Further details of the life of Frate Santi will be found in a work entitled *Uomini illustri di Ravenna Antica.* Bologna, 1703.

are rather black, presenting the appearance that bones generally have when long enclosed in metallic, marble, or wooden sepulchres. Their texture has not undergone any remarkable alteration; and what is even more surprising, is the fact, that, with the exception of the round-headed articulations at the extremity of certain long bones, and in some localities of the cranium, no important change from time or damp is apparent.

It was found that the bones, compared with a perfect human skeleton, wanted precisely those portions which were discovered in the original sepulchre, and it was further noticed, that the hue of the surface of those phalanges was similar to that of the bones found in Frate Santi's wooden chest. The length of the skeleton was 1 mètre and 55 centimètres.* If to this length be added that of the soft parts, such as the cartilages, &c. of the human subject when living, it follows that the bones were those of a man of middle stature. The weight of the bones, without the head, was 4 kilogrammes and 150 grammes; the cranium weighed 730 grammes.†

* The Italian mètre is the same as the French, and is equivalent to 39·37089 English inches; the centimètre to 0·39371 inches; and the millimètre to 0·03937 inches.

† The kilogramme is equal to 2·2048571 lbs., and the gramme to 15·434000 grains.

Examination of the skeleton of the trunk and of the four extremities, showed that the clavicles were considerably curved—due to the resistance of the humeri and scapulars—as were also the bones of the thighs, legs, and feet. The sacrum was found joined to the first portion of the coccyx. The femurs were 44 centimètres and 5 millimètres long.

As might be expected, the portion of these osseous remains that engaged the greatest attention, and was subjected to the most detailed examination, was the cranium, which in all human skeletons must be considered the most noble portion, as being the seat of the brain, always regarded by anatomists as closely connected with the thinking organs of man. In order to ascertain the probable weight of this organ, the cavity in which the brain was enclosed was filled with grains of rice, which weighed 1 kilogramme and 420 grammes, equal to 3·1319 lbs. avoirdupois.* Very accurate measurements were made of various parts of the cranium, the principal only of which are subjoined. The diameter from the occiput to the frontal bone, was 31 centimètres and 7 millimètres; the transverse diameter, taken

* The average weight of the human brain of adult man, according to the late Professor Quetelet, who weighed several hundreds, is three and a half pounds.

between the ears, 31 centimètres and 8 millimètres, and the vertical diameter, 14 centimètres.

The periphery of the cranium, measured along two lines, starting respectively from points on each side of the most projecting part of the occipital protuberance, and terminating at the nasal prominence, was 52 centimètres and 5 millimètres.

Particular attention is drawn in the Report to the circumstance, that the upper jaw had been furnished with only two incisors (the central incisors) instead of four, and that the right last molar tooth had not been naturally developed.

Various prominences were extremely conspicuous on Dante's skull; one in particular was remarkable for its great size. It was situated near the middle and upper part of the frontal bone, and was of longitudinal form.

Though not acknowledging themselves to be disciples of Gall or Spurzheim, the Commissioners draw particular attention to these prominences, and state that, according to the laws of phrenology, Dante largely possessed the organs of poetry, imagination, benevolence, religion, veneration, independence, self-esteem, pride, conscientiousness, mechanical design, sculpture and architecture.

Finally, the Commissioners declare, with justifiable

pride, that Dante's skull denotes the highest order of brain power, being precisely similar in conformation to the skulls of those individuals who have held supreme dominion over the minds of men, and have been the true masters of mankind.

In order to enable the public to see these precious remains, the Commissioners and authorities of Ravenna directed that they should lie in state, efficiently protected by glass.

Accordingly, on the 25th of June, which was Sunday, they were exposed to public view in the Braccioforte chapel, and it was the opinion of all those who had the high privilege of gazing on the head of the author of the 'Divina Commedia,' that it possessed all the physical features of the highest intellectual organisation.* And as it cannot be our privilege to look on this relic of surpassing interest, it will be satisfactory to the reader, and especially to those who have seen the mask of the illustrious poet preserved in the Uffizi Gallery, to which allusion has

* Boccaccio tells us that 'Dante was of middle height, but after he had arrived at years of maturity he walked heavily. His visage was long, the nose aquiline, the eyes rather large, the jaw also large, and the lower lip protruded beyond the upper. His complexion was brown, his hair and beard thick, black, and crisp, and his countenance melancholy and thoughtful.' It is worthy of note that, according to Giotto's portrait of Dante in the Bargello, his hair was more brown than black.

been made, to learn that it has been found, on most careful comparison, to be in all respects similar in configuration to the cranium discovered in the wooden chest at Ravenna. The length of the nasal bones agreed precisely, and the same remark applies to all other parts which admitted of measurement.

Thus, although, as the Commissioners observe, some circumstances in connection with Dante's original sepulchre have yet to be made clear, especially as regards its early history, there is no reason to doubt, that the human remains they examined were the genuine and sacred bones of Dante.

You will therefore come to the conclusion that the Report of these Royal Commissioners is one of rare and surpassing interest. The discovery of any portion of Dante's remains, at a time when Italy was about to honour the poet's memory by commemorating the sixth centenary of his birth with great pomp and solemnity, may be indeed regarded, as the Commissioners observe, as almost miraculous; but when we find that among those remains is the head of Italy's immortal poet, the discovery may well be considered as one of the most interesting that has ever been made. For that is the head of a man who, six centuries ago, when Italy was torn by political factions, each ambitious for power, and all entirely

unscrupulous as to the means employed to attain it, laboured with untiring zeal to bring about Italian unity;* yet whose patriotism met no other reward than exile, how bitterly felt appears from those touching lines in the 'Paradiso':—

> . . . . Si come sa di sale
> Lo pane altrui, e com' è duro calle
> Lo scendere e 'l salir per l' altrui scale.

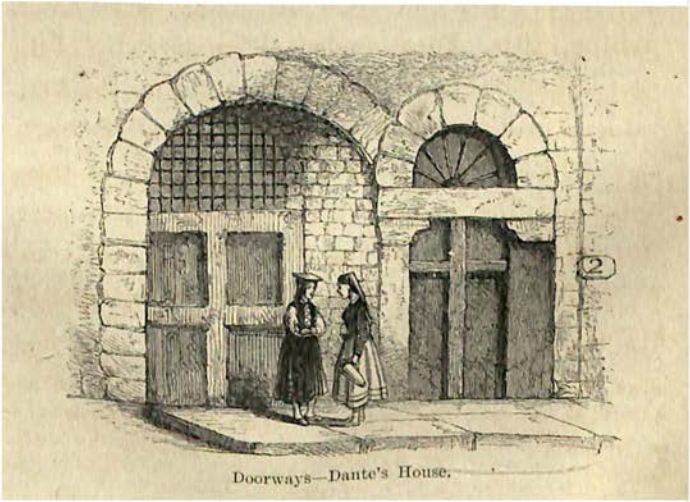
But even more interesting is the knowledge, that this head, so wonderfully preserved, was that of one of the most divinely-inspired poets that the world has ever seen.

These remains of Dante are, moreover, the more precious, and their preservation surprising, when it is borne in mind that not a single word of his handwriting exists. For, abundant as are the *codici* of the poet's immortal work, all are copies. After the festival held in Florence in 1865 in honour of his birth, an exhibition took place in the Bargello, of these *codici* and other manuscripts connected with the poet. No less than 171 *codici* of the 'Divina Commedia' were exhibited. Of these 111 were contributed by

* 'Florence for Italy, and Italy for the world,' were his words when he heard his sentence of banishment. And it will be remembered, that all traitors to the cause of his country he condemned to eternal misery: imprisoning them, in his 'Inferno,' in the frozen lake of Antenora.

Florence, 23 by Milan, 6 by Naples, 5 by Bologna, 5 by Siena; Parma and Modena sent 4 each; Turin, Brescia, Ravenna, and Cortona, 2 each; and Genoa, Rimini, Imola, Friuli, and Pappi, 1 each. The authentic dates ranged from 1300 to 1398. It will be observed that Rome did not assist in this great feast for Dantophilists. Among other pleasant results, probably due to this commemorative festival, is the fact that, while in 1858 it was difficult to procure copies of Dante's works, at a moderate price, now they may be had for one franc.*

* The greator portion of this chapter appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine.*



Doorways—Dante's House.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Definition of Manufactures—Our House of Lords—Florence not a Manufacturing City—The Silk Manufacture—Establishment of Florentine Mosaic—Straw Plait and Straw Hats—Value of this Manufacture—Straw from which it is made—Price of fine Tuscan Straw Hats—Earnings of Straw-Plaiters—Snuff and Cigar Manufactory—Prices of Cigars—Numbers made Daily—Sale of Cigar Ends—La Doccia Porcelain Works—Their Situation—La Petraja—The Ginori Family—Introduction of Angora Sheep—Enterprise of the Marquis Carlo Ginori—Sketch of the History of the Manufacture of Porcelain—Early productions of La Doccia—Capo di Monte Establishment—Delicate Processes—Raphael Ware—Lorenzo Ginori—Nature of the Works produced at La Doccia—A novel Fish-dish—Higher branches of the Ceramic Art—Majolica Ecclesiastical Ornaments—Clays used at La Doccia—'Loves of Monsters'—A Porcelain Coach—Sèvres Vases—Tentative Processes—Report of Jurors on the Doccia Manufactures—Condition of the Artisans—New Shop for sale of the productions of La Doccia in Florence.

It has been truly said, that the perfection of manufacture is the annihilation of art; for just as lanes are more picturesque than roads, and ships than steamers, so are the works of the hand, provided that it be guided by the eye of an artist, more pleasing than the results of machinery.

The interior of our House of Lords is certainly

impressive, but if we examine the details of the ornamentation, the result is disappointing. Carving reflects carving with disheartening sameness; wooden panels and metal ornaments being wrought by machinery, which obeys the same invariable law, and produces the same invariable results. We have only to look at the works of Albert Durer, Benvenuto Cellini, or Grinling Gibbons, to feel sure that if they had decorated this lordly chamber, we should have real treasures of art to delight us.

Happily, Florence is not yet a manufacturing city in the Manchester sense of this term. Her silk-looms are in the houses of weavers, who ply their trade without the aid of steam-power; her beautiful picture-frames are still carved by hand, and her exquisite *pietre commesse*, or Florentine mosaic, is produced entirely without the interposition of machinery, excepting sawing the large blocks of stone into slices. By far the largest manufacture in or near Florence, in the literal sense of a fabric, 'made by hand,' is that of straw plait. This important branch of industry has long formed an extensive article of export, especially to England and the United States. Besides their sale in Italy, the value of straw hats and plaiting, exported annually, averages 300,000*l*. The straw

generally used is that of wheat sown in December, known to botanists as *triticum æstivum*, and in Italy by the name of *marzuolo*. In order to bleach the straw, it is exposed to the dew during the night, and then placed in the sun, after which it undergoes fumigation with sulphur, in order to give it the requisite brightness and colour. The celebrated Tuscan straw hats were originally made at Signa, seven miles from Florence; they soon attained a high reputation for their exquisite beauty and fineness, realising in some instances as much as 1,200 francs. Lastri made them the subject of a poem, and they are frequently mentioned by contemporary writers. In the suburbs of Florence, and at all the villages round the city, nearly every woman works more or less at straw-plaiting. Walking, in their houses, or at their doorways, they may be seen, young, middle-aged, and old, weaving the straw into plaits and braids, with surprising dexterity. The motion of their fingers is often so quick that you cannot follow it. Fast and good plaiters can earn as much as two shillings a day; and it is by no means uncommon for girls to make so much money by this occupation as to cause them to be sought in marriage, for the fortunes thus acquired.

Another large manufactory in Florence, is that of snuff and cigars. The establishment was formerly in the hands of Messrs. Fenzi & Co., but it now belongs to Government. It employs one hundred and fifty men, and eight hundred women, the majority of whom are occupied in making cigars. For this work the men earn twenty-six cents per hundred cigars, the women, who are said not to take as much pains in the manipulation of the tobacco as the men, fifteen cents. The average number of cigars made by each hand daily is 800, the working hours being from eight to four, with half an hour allowed for dinner. An extraordinary hump-backed deformity, known as Gobbo, with extremely slender and nimble fingers, has made as many as 2,000 in a long summer day. The best cigars are made of Virginian tobacco, and are sold at the rate of seven cents each; the second quality, of Kentucky tobacco, are sold at five cents. The consumption of cigars in Florence is enormous. At nightfall you will see numerous lights in the leading streets, darting here and there like animated glowworms, close to the pavement. They proceed from small lanterns carried by men and boys in search of rejected cigar ends, which are sold in repulsive-looking heaps to peasants in the Piazza Signoria on market days.

Though not actually in Florence, the extremely interesting porcelain works, belonging to the Marquis Lorenzo Ginori, must be included among the manufacturing establishments of that city.

They are charmingly situated on the lowest slopes of the Apennines, about seven miles from Florence, and two and a half miles beyond the modest villa of La Petraja, which possesses greater attractions for Victor Emmanuel than the solid grandeur of the Palazzo Pitti.*

Accustomed as we are in England to associate manufactories with smoke, and all that is the reverse of picturesque, you are not prepared to find these porcelain works occupying a building which appears at a distance very similar to a large Italian villa. The situation of La Doccia is, indeed, extremely beautiful, so much so, that, apart from its artistic and commercial interest, it is well worth visiting. If pressed for time, you can avail yourself of the railway, and by stopping at the Sesto station, you will be within two miles of the works. But the entire distance between Florence and La Doccia is

* It is asserted in Florence that the King has never slept in this palace. This is erroneous, but it is quite true that His Majesty prefers La Petraja to the palace of the Medici.

so full of beauties, especially when you face the Apennines, that it is far better to walk or drive in an open carriage, than proceed by train. It will be necessary to procure an order to see the manufactory. This, which is easily obtained in Florence, admits on all Thursdays excepting when a fête happens to fall on this day.

The erection of these works on Tuscan ground was extremely appropriate; for in Tuscany, ages ago, many of the famous Etruscan vases were manufactured. Several centuries, however, elapsed between the manufacture of these curious ceramic productions and the establishment of the Doccia works. But they are entitled to be regarded with considerable respect on the score of antiquity, as they are nearly as old as the celebrated Sèvres manufactory, which was founded in 1735. Bearing in mind, too, that the Imperial establishment, near Paris, has always been supported by Government, whereas that at La Doccia has been carried on by private enterprise, the great progress made at this establishment is highly creditable to the proprietor as well as to the workmen.

The Ginori family have long been noted for their labours in connection with agricultural and manu-

facturing industry. Early in the eighteenth century the Marquis Carlo Ginori introduced the Angora sheep into Italy, for the purpose of making fine shawls, and other articles of dress, from its wool, and to this nobleman is the credit due of having established the porcelain manufactory bearing the family name. Having been appointed governor of Leghorn, he chartered a ship from that port to the east—on which occasion the flag of Tuscany was seen for the first time in that part of the globe—for the express purpose of procuring clay, similar to that used by the Chinese and Japanese in the manufacture of their celebrated vases.

It was long believed that what was called egg-shell china, was made of egg-shells and sea-shells, mixed in certain proportions, and then buried for one hundred years. Dr. Johnson, as you may remember, whimsically derives the term porcelain from this belief — *pour cent années* — by which Europe was deceived for nearly two centuries.*

The Marquis's next step was to engage the services of an eminent chemist named Wandhelein,

* The probable derivation of porcelain is from *porcellana*, the Portuguese for a vessel or cup; and here I may state, that the difference commonly found between what is technically called hard and soft paste is, that porcelain made of the latter can be scratched with a file.

whom he procured at Vienna, and of a botanist, to whom was confided the task of raising rare and beautiful flowers, which might be used advantageously as patterns for floral decorations.

The Marquis now proceeded to erect his works, availing himself in their construction of all the experience which the famous porcelain works at Meissen near Dresden afforded. Although many failures immediately ensued, they only had the effect of inciting the Marquis to renewed efforts. He made various journeys to Germany, France, and England, for the purpose of visiting the porcelain works in those countries. Success eventually crowned his energy and perseverance, and in 1740 the manufactures of La Doccia were in the market.*

The early productions of this establishment were, as might be expected, of a crude nature compared to

* An inferior description of soft porcelain was made in Florence as early as 1585. Some specimens exist in the South Kensington Museum. At St. Cloud, near Paris, porcelain was produced in 1695; in Germany, in 1709; and in the middle of the past century, at Bow, Chelsea and Derby. The famous Worcester porcelain, which is said by competent judges to be the nearest European approach to the porcelain of China or Japan, was made about the same period. It was invented by Dr. Wall, who, after having tried a great variety of experiments, succeeded in producing an extremely beautiful translucent paste of close texture, with a delicate glaze homogeneously united to the body. A rude crescent and a capital W. are among the peculiar trade-marks of the earliest Worcester porcelain.

those now turned out: and we may perhaps doubt whether such perfection as we now see would have been attained had the Government of France not liberally thrown the doors of the Sèvres manufactory open. But, imperfect as they were, they attracted the attention of the Georgofili Academy of Florence, the members of which passed a resolution, to the effect, that the enterprise of the Marquis Giñori deserved encouragement, and that the coloured and embossed porcelain, and especially the paintings on dishes and vases, merited approbation.

It is probable that the Georgofili Academy was induced to encourage the Marquis Ginori's undertaking, from the circumstance that about the period when the foregoing resolution was passed, the Capo di Monte porcelain works at Naples were closed, leaving the Marquis Ginori alone in this field of commercial enterprise. And indeed it required more than ordinary boldness to carry on the works, involving, as they did, great expenditure, with a very doubtful prospect of profitable returns.

The extremely delicate compositions involved in the various bodies, glazes, and colours of porcelain, are such as to require profound chemical knowledge, while the facilities offered for developing beautiful forms and decorative designs challenge the coopera-

tion of the artist, and in so peculiar a degree that even Raphael himself was not indifferent to this branch of art.*

The liberal policy of throwing open the vast Sèvres establishment, and allowing all the chemical and artistic details to be freely examined, has been of signal service to the ceramic works on the continent and in England; for although the beautiful Kaolin clay, found near Limoges, was known to European porcelain manufacturers shortly after its discovery in 1768, Sèvres alone produced porcelain of a creamy and pearly softness and of a finish that may be said to be still unequalled by any other ceramic productions in Europe.

But although Sèvres remains unrivalled in the highest features of ceramic art, other porcelain manufactories run her very hard in ceramic productions generally. And there are many articles manufactured at the Doccia works which would be highly creditable to Sèvres.

But while the credit of these valuable works

* Although the so-called Raphael ware was undoubtedly painted by artists of his school, there is evidence that the great master furnished some designs for this porcelain, or, more properly speaking, glazed earthenware. Writing to the Duchess of Urbino, he informs her that the drawings are ready which she had desired to be made for certain vases for her house, thus proving that some of them, at least, are by that great painter's own hand.

belongs to Carlo Ginori, his son Lorenzo is also entitled to praise for having enlarged and greatly improved them, while in 1819 the Marquis Carlo Leopoldo, another representative of this family, still further improved the works. These, which are extremely extensive, occupying three sides of a spacious quadrangle, employ two hundred hands. The majority are engaged in manufacturing ordinary porcelain for domestic use; for, although porcelain, in the form of quaint vessels, has long been known throughout Italy, many serviceable domestic articles have until recently been comparatively unknown in Italian houses.* Vast quantities of insulators for telegraph wires are also made here, telegraphy in Italy being in the course of rapid development.

But it is in the higher branches of the ceramic art that the visitor to La Doccia will be most interested. Remembering the varied and extremely beautiful specimens of porcelain from this establishment exhibited at the last London International Exhibition, I was prepared to see a rich collection of objects, but

* It was not very long ago that an Italian lady, in the course of a visit to La Doccia, saw an article for toilette purposes, which seemed to her to be admirably adapted for serving fish at table. She accordingly purchased it, and greatly surprised her friends, who were better informed in this matter than herself, by placing a *bidet* on the dinner-table in which a fish was snugly ensconced.

those in the large hall built for the express purpose of exhibiting the products of the establishment, greatly exceeded my expectations.

Here are statuettes, exquisite vases, tiles, cornices with fruit and flower ornaments, tazzi, busts in biscotto, admirable imitations of the celebrated Luca della Robbia ware—one exceeding six feet in diameter —and a vast variety of specimens of majolica. The hall containing these objects has indeed the appearance of being prepared for a great fête, and the illusion is strengthened by several porcelain chandeliers, made to resemble garlands of flowers hanging from the ceiling.

The earliest date on any object exhibited in this hall is 1746; but it was not until long after that period that the productions of La Doccia assumed their present beauty.

Your interest in these will be greatly increased by the kind facilities which are given the visitor of seeing the various processes of manufacture. Many of these are of a very elaborate nature; nearly all require great care and delicacy of manipulation. Perhaps the most interesting is the process of imparting a metallic lustre to plates and dishes, which is effected by immersing them in caldrons of metallic varnishes; and the reproduction of exquisitely em-

bossed cinque cento objects. The highest class of painting is at present executed by one person, who possesses great artistic ability.

It is worth visiting the adjoining church for the purpose of seeing the ecclesiastical majolica ornaments, all of which have been made at La Doccia. They are extremely beautiful, and, what is fully as important, highly appropriate.

As a proof of the extreme difficulty attending the production of the finer kinds of porcelain, it may be stated, that although various attempts have been made at La Doccia to manufacture the pâte sur pâte china, invented a few years ago at Sèvres, they have hitherto been unsuccessful. The process, which may be described as painting in clay upon clay, is capable of producing peculiar beautiful effects, but it requires high artistic power, and great facility of execution in all its various manipulative details. The examples shown of this new process at the Exhibition in 1862 would alone have been sufficient to attest the mastery still maintained by Sèvres in the most difficult processes of ceramic art.

The clays used at La Doccia are procured from Calabria, Spain, England, France, the Neapolitan provinces, and districts near Florence. By far the best is that from the vicinity of Limoges, which is

of great purity and exquisite whiteness. With this clay, the most elaborate articles of porcelain are made at La Doccia.

The caprices of fashion are extremely curious. What one age rejects as barbarous, is received in another age as a type of beauty. Thus, we find of late a great tendency at Sèvres and in Germany to copy the feeble productions of the Italian ceramic school, such as were formerly in great favour in England. Addison, you will remember, tells us in the 'Spectator,' that no house in his day was considered properly furnished unless the rooms were filled with vast quantities of grotesque china, or, as the old ladies called it, 'loves of monsters.' From this evil the establishment at La Doccia is in a great measure free. Some strange articles have certainly been produced here, the strangest, perhaps, being a porcelain carriage, described by Beckford as making a great sensation at the carnival in Florence, in the days when that holiday was duly honoured.

When we consider how, with a natural substance, originally almost valueless, objects of exquisite form may be made, glowing with lovely hues, it is to be regretted that the directors of our great ceramic manufactories should not devote themselves more to the higher branches of this art. It may be remem-

bered that a pair of Sèvres vases, from the Bernal collection, realised at an auction 1,942*l.* 10*s.*; an enormous sum, you will justly say, but if you had an opportunity of examining the vases closely, you doubtless found that they were not only remarkable for great elegance of form, but also that they were composed of what is technically termed pâte tendre, their colour rose du Barri, and the paintings on them of the most finished and exquisite nature.

And why should not Italy produce as fine specimens of ceramic art as these? It is very satisfactory to be able to state that the noble proprietor of the establishment at La Doccia is doing all in his power to increase the excellence of his already beautiful manufactures. Indeed it is, we believe, no secret that the cause of the undertaking having been hitherto less profitable than was expected, is due to the great expense of various experiments made in tentative processes.

How highly the fine specimens of porcelain produced at La Doccia are esteemed, is apparent by the fact that all the articles from this establishment exhibited in London in 1862, amounting in value to 94,000 francs, were sold, and here is the report of the Exhibition jurors on them:—

'This collection is highly important, both as to the

comprehensive range of its material and the general excellence of its production. The examples include statuettes, vases, and panels in alto and basso-relievo, cabinets, &c. coloured as the celebrated Capo di Monte wares, and a series of examples in the oriental style.

'The faience presents several remarkably successful reproductions of the Urbino and Pesaro pottery of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, among which are illustrations of the lustred fabrics very carefully rendered. Many of the pieces are of large dimensions, and show great proficiency in manufacturing resources.

'There are also admirable examples of the Luca della Robbia ware. The modelling of the figures is of a very high order, and the forms of the ornamental pieces are of good character.

'The whole series, evidences not only the possession of high artistic requirements, but a perfection in the practical details of the fabrication of very rare attainment.'

This is high praise, but not beyond the merit of the objects. It is gratifying to be able to add, that the workmen in the employment of the Marquis Ginori are extremely well lodged, in houses adjoining the works, erected for them by the late

Marquis and by his successor. A small minority of those employed are women. All labour ten hours daily. Boys are employed to turn the wheels; human power being, unfortunately, cheaper that that of steam. The ventilation in the workrooms was extremely defective: but Italians are very indifferent respecting a supply of pure air, and will not only exist, but work without murmuring, in places where many Englishmen would succumb.

Since Florence has become a capital, the Marquis Ginori has opened an establishment in that city for the sale of the productions of La Doccia. It is one of the most beautiful and artistic shops in Florence, and attracts crowds before its windows. Husbands who purpose visiting the capital of Italy with their wives, and whose purses are neither very long nor full, may not thank me for this information; but ladies have a great knack of finding out tempting shops, and those visiting Florence, may spend their husbands' money far from injudiciously by purchasing a souvenir of La Doccia. Nor are the articles expensive. You may, of course, expend large sums on vases glowing with colours, or elaborate majolica dishes, but many useful articles can be obtained in this porcelain paradise at moderate prices; and should you desire artistic specimens, you may

become the possessor of a most faithful copy of Luca della Robbia's famous Madonna and cherubim, adoring the infant Christ, of the same size as the original, for eighty-five francs.

Franciscan Chapel, Fiesole.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Senatore Matteucci's Letter to the Italians—The Italian cry, 'Farà da sè!'—Italy as the Country of departed Heroes—Advantages of War—A Patrician Profession—Florentine Indolence—The call to Arms—Prospects of Italy—The Tedeschi—The Latin and the Teuton—The National Treasury—Duties of the Italian Government—Parliamentary Shortcomings—Taxation of Italy—The Roman Question—Origin of the cry, 'Rome the Capital of Italy!'—Unfitness of Rome to be a great Metropolis—The Papacy and Italy—The First Napoleon's Decree respecting the Papal States—Probability that Florence will remain the Capital of Italy—Dante's Florence—Venice, past and present—Austrian Rule—Palace of the Doges—Good Work to be done in Italy.

It would be well for Italy, if among her citizens she could number more men like the Marquis Ginori. For, while God has been most bountiful to that land, filling her with innumerable resources, there has been an apathy among Italians, which is neither creditable to them, nor encouraging as regards the future. Senatore Matteucci, to whom allusion has been made, in his scientific capacity, has lately published a letter embodying sentiments which I have often heard him express. He sets forth the shortcomings of his countrymen with wholesome bold-

ness, and emphatically declares, if Italy is to hold her own among European nations, she must throw off that *dolce far nienteism* for which she is unenviably notorious. Italians have, indeed, been too long in the habit of living on the memories of the past, and on self-praise, and of exclaiming *Italia farà da sè*! while greatly indebted to others for numerous acquisitions. Long interesting to Europe as a vast museum of art treasures, we have been accustomed to regard Italy as the country of departed heroes, rather than that of living men, imbued with the spirit of the present age, which admits of no pause in the race. War, pregnant as it undoubtedly is with evil and misery, possesses at least the advantage of lifting nations above unbridled selfish indulgence. Ancient Rome has shown us how all that is noble in man may be crushed out of him by sensuality, and whatever may tend to draw the youth of Italy from the paths of effeminacy and luxury, will assuredly make them better citizens. It will be a happy day for Italy, when parents will be no longer proud of replying to the question—'Of what profession is your son?' 'È in piazza,' meaning that he lounges indolently through the streets, and frequents the caffès and Cascine. The disinclination to exertion among Italians is indeed amazing. A Florentine,

whose son purposed entering a house of business in Florence last spring, declined renting apartments about one mile from the office, alleging that his son could not be expected to walk so far daily. But while disinclined to exertion when allied to business, recent events testify that, at their country's call, the youth of Italy will respond to a man. On the breaking out of the late war, all capable of serving were eager to bear arms, and ladies organised societies for the relief of the sick and wounded, many women being members of these associations whose previous lives had only been remarkable for fashion and frivolity.

Let us hope, therefore, that Italy is at length about to enter on a long cycle of peace, and that her people will be engaged in the noble work of developing the great natural resources of their country. As long as the Austrians were within the natural geographical limits of Italy, it was hopeless to expect that Italians would sit contentedly under their vine and olive trees. They are now gone, and the peninsula is crowned by the coping-stone of fair Venetia. It is impossible to overestimate the importance to Italy of this addition to their kingdom. The Latin and the Teuton have now placed between them those boundaries which ought

never to have been overstepped, and while Italy rejoices at the annexation of Venetia, the joy of the Venetians is great. Life fills the water streets of Venice, and what was seen in Tuscany, when her last Grand Duke fled, may be now witnessed throughout Venetia. Thus the late war, although very costly, and but moderately glorious to the Italian arms, will have been a good investment if it leads, as it surely must, to the reduction of the army by at least one-half. The insolvency of the national treasury is almost entirely due to the enormous military expenditure. Troops will, unfortunately, be required to awe revolutionists in Sicily, and to root out the brigands, but these necessary duties can be performed with a comparatively small force. Italy will, of course, be answerable for her share of the Venetian debt; but the wealth and resources of Lombardy and Venetia are such, that a few years ago they contributed a third part of the entire revenue of the Austrian empire. Frugality and regular administration are the most pressing necessities of Italy. The powerful ally, by whose means Venetia has been added to Victor Emmanuel's dominions, supplies a valuable example to the young kingdom. From the days of the great Elector, Prussia has always been eminent among nations for rigid eco-

nomy, and admirable organisation of the public service. In Italy, where Parliament has the same freedom and power as in England to regulate and control the public expenditure, the accounts of the State have not once been fairly discussed and strictly voted since 1859, simply from the incredible unwillingness of the deputies to give their time to real business, and, above all, to financial matters. The legislature is ever ready to sanction provisional budgets, and to grant full powers to Government on matters affecting the public expenditure—a wholesale system of renewing bills which is at once unstatesmanlike and pernicious. This must be reformed, if Italy is not to become insolvent. The reduction of the army, on the one hand, and the large funds accruing from the confiscation of the monastic estates, with the revenues which will arise from the resources of the country, skilfully developed, should, with proper management, convert what is now a most alarming deficit into a surplus. The debt of Italy, including the new loan of thirty millions sterling, but not the debt of Venetia, is fully two hundred millions sterling—an enormous sum for a young nation. The great business, therefore, for Italy, is to effect a reduction of her expenses within the narrowest limits, consistent with the effec-

tive administration of the public service. Bankruptcy and high taxation are the Scylla and Charybdis, between which the Italian Government will have to steer; and if they can navigate the State vessel between these dangers they will deserve well of their country. But the people must be prepared to pay higher taxes than those now imposed.

Great difficulties undoubtedly attend Italian unity, and the smooth working of the vast political machine of Italian Government. A country possessing a climate in which one sentinel is nearly frozen to death, at the same time that another is glad to seek the friendly shade of a tree, necessarily contains great diversity of character. Southern and central Italy foster languor, while in the north of that peninsula the wind blows vigour of mind and body from the Alps.

In comparison with the Venetian question, now happily solved, that of Rome sinks into insignificance. The Venetian provinces will add largely to the strength of the monarchy; but the desire to possess Rome is, after all, at nb sentiment. Such at least is the impression conveyed to me by Florentines The cry of Rome as the capital of Italy, was the result, in a great measure, of the temporal power of the Pope, backed by Austria and the French occupa-

tion. Were the question of transferring the capital to Rome brought now before the Italian Parliament, it is extremely doubtful whether it would be carried. For that decayed city, smitten during a large portion of the year with malaria, is assuredly not fitted to become the metropolis of united Italy. That a reconciliation between Rome and Italy, Papacy and patriotism, is essential to the welfare of Victor Emmanuel and his dominions is undeniable. Though terribly shaken by scepticism, Italy is a more Christian country than France; and although the monastic institutions in Italy no longer exist, the Government cannot, and will not, allow her to be without a State religion. For better or worse the Papacy has been associated with Italy for 1500 years. Shaken by many disasters, the Pope may now feel the force of events, and if not entirely dead to common sense, he will eventually yield to these, and give his spiritual consent to those under his feeble reign being Italianised, whether occupying the Vatican or an exile from Rome. The decree of the first Napoleon with reference to the Papacy in his day, possesses at this juncture considerable interest. It appears in the nineteenth volume of his correspondence, and runs thus:—'I have given orders to bring affairs at Rome to an issue. Considering that when Charlemagne,

Emperor of the French, and our august predecessor, made a donation of several countships to the bishops of Rome; he gave them as fiefs only, and for the good of his dominions, but that Rome remained a portion of his empire;—that since his time this union of spiritual and temporal power has been often, and still is, a cause of dispute, and has repeatedly led the Pontiffs to employ the influence of the one to sustain the pretensions of the other, and that consequently spiritual interests and the affairs of heaven, which cannot change, are confounded with earthly things, which fluctuate with circumstances and political revolutions;—we decree that the Papal States shall form a part of the French empire.'

The Emperor was right; events having shown that the Papacy and temporal power cannot coexist to the advantage of Italy. As the spiritual head of the Roman Catholic Church, the Pope's influence is enormous, and in this capacity Pius IX. may be at one and the same time a mighty chief and a patriot.

It will, indeed, be highly gratifying to see the country of Cæsar and of Cicero settling down, after many misfortunes, under a constitution closely resembling our own; and believing that the capital of that country will continue to be Florence, let us

hope that what Dante said of that city six centuries ago may again come to pass :—

> Godi, Firenze, poi che sei si grande
> Che per mare e per terra batti l' ali.*

But it cannot be too deeply impressed on Italians that they must now help themselves. The people must submit to that discipline which is an essential condition of material prosperity. To raise that once gorgeous city of the sea, which they have just acquired, from its fallen state, is alone a task of great importance. But Italians must give up their too common rhapsodies about the Queen of the Adriatic, and endeavour rather to make her a stirring commercial port than a city of indolent pleasure. Etty, we are told, was unable to purchase a box of colours in the former glorious city of Titian, and we know that, with the exception of the Murano Glass Works, the great manufactures which made Venice famous no longer exist. The work to be done before that city can hold up her head again among even the second-rate seaports of Europe is gigantic, but should not be disheartening; and while willing to admit that the Austrian yoke has lain very heavy on Venice, we must not lose sight of the fact that under Austrian

* *Inferno*, canto xxvi.

rule several useful public works have been accomplished in Venetia. The sea thoroughfares of Venice have been cleansed from sand, railways constructed, and the architecture of the city, which the citizens were the first to despoil, has been placed under municipal protection. The day may be distant before Victor Emmanuel's exchequer will be materially enriched by Venetian commerce or manufactures, but it is certain that the lustre of his crown will be greatly enhanced by its shining in the Palace of the Doges.

Venice is by no means, however, the only city in Italy that requires resuscitation. Ferrara and Pisa, Ravenna and Piacenza, Pavia, Siena, and many other towns, are half dead. But they can be quickened. From Florence, as the new capital, much will be expected; and with reason, for her example will have immense weight throughout the kingdom. One of the greatest blessings that can be desired is a hard-working, honest, and in all respects good Parliament in Florence. But Italian statesmen must cultivate feelings of loyalty and patriotism which shall prevail over apathy and discontent. It will be well for Italy if Victor Emmanuel, who is universally beloved by his subjects, addresses himself to the important task of making Italians feel that their

interests are now common, and that if they desire their country to be truly great they must lay aside all party feeling. Assuredly there has never been a period in the history of Italy when well-directed energy is so certain of leading to glorious results as at the present time.

Galileo's Tower.

Florence, from Boboli Gardens.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Boboli Gardens—Close of the Florence Season—Daughters on Hand—Florence in Summer—Pisan Proverb respecting Florentines — Spring Flowers — Verdurous Walls—Milton's 'Paradise Lost'—Buontalenti's Grotto—Redi's whimsical Lines—Francis II. and his Dogs—Mary de Medicis and the Dwarf—Villa Mozzi—Spence — Villa Salviati—Portrait of Grisi — Leave Florence—Pistoia—The Collo Gigliato—The Serravalle—Sieges of Pistoia—Fearful Sufferings—Victor Emmanuel's Speech respecting ancient Local Animosities—The Pistoian Hero Grandonio—A mighty Giant—Superstition of the Pistoians—How to stop Rain—Illumination of the Cathedral—Fair—A new way to sell Books—La Corilla—Handsome Citizens—Environs of Pistoia—Costumes—Cotton Nightcaps—Forests on the Apennines—Effect of Forest Scenery on Dante and Goethe—Salvator Rosa and Lorenzo Lippi—Excursion to Castle of Serravalle—Fertile Valley—Villa Celli—Lord Westbury—Enormous Camellias—Residential advantages of Pistoia—Conclusion.

When the Boboli gardens—in which roses bloom in soft beauty all through the winter—begin to

wear their spring robes, thoughts stir English visitors to Florence, that the time for their departure from the city of flowers draws nigh. Balls and parties being at an end, those who apparently cannot live without these excitements, or who have daughters who have not been 'got off,' rush to London, to undergo purgatorial confinement in small, ill-ventilated rooms; or to stand in a narrow doorway for hours, in the condition of an 'exhausted receiver.'

Not probably, however, to partake of these so-called gaieties, do the majority of visitors turn their backs on Florence, but because the heat of that city, as the year waxes, becomes almost intolerable to those accustomed to our more northern latitude. The Lung' Arno, on the sunny side of which you loved to linger, burns, during summer, like a furnace; while the whiteness of the houses is so painful to the eyes, as to cause you, should you experience it, to feel the truth of the Pisan proverb, applied to Florentines when Tuscan cities were on very unneighbourly terms—'As blind as a Florentine.'

I did not, however, depart from Florence until the sward in the beautiful Boboli gardens was a very mosaic of wild flowers, and the peach and almond

trees were flushed with roseate hues. No month here, indeed, is flowerless: in mid-winter the blossoms of the orange and lemon trees perfume the air. As early as February you may, in sheltered localities, feel the warm breath of spring on your cheek; and the sun, even at this early period of the year, lures the quick lizard from its retreat. A little later violets, anemones, blue-bells, crocuses, and orchids, almost jostle each other in crowded loveliness; and the long cathedral aisles of foliage, for which the Boboli gardens are remarkable, begin to cast a pleasant shade. May it not have been while walking between these lofty verdurous walls of perpetual green, that Milton conceived the lines on the Indian who

> . . . . tends his pasturing herds
> At loopholes cut through thickest shade?

This great poet drew many of the images in his poems from scenes in Italy; and it is said that the first idea of his 'Paradise Lost' arose from a play he witnessed at Milan, entitled 'Adam; or, Original Sin.'

Among the numerous advantages that Florentines enjoy, is access to these gardens; which, though essentially belonging to the Pitti Palace, and royal property, are liberally thrown open to the public on

each Sunday and Thursday throughout the year. This is an inestimable boon to the citizens in summer; for then, when the city is blazing with heat, they retain a most delicious coolness. Should you visit them at this season, you will be able to appreciate the delight of Buontalenti's grotto; though you will see that it is by no means adapted for the purpose set forth in Redi's whimsical lines, modern science telling us that ice-houses should not be erected in damp places:—

E voi Satiri lasciate
Tante frottole e tanti riboboli,
E del ghiaccio mi portate
Dalla grotta del giardino di Boboli.
Con alti picchi
Di mazzapicchi
Dirompetelo,
Sgretalatelo,
Infragnetelo,
Stritolatelo,
Finche tutto si possa risolvere
In minuta freddissima polvere.*

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* One of our distinguished poets has kindly favoured me with the following translation of the above lines:—

Come now, O ye Satyrs, for once I shall trouble ye
To forego all your cunning,
Freaks, follies, and funning;
And, if ye be wise,
Go, fetch me some ice
From out the cool grot in the gardens of Boboli;

From no locality will you obtain a more impressive view of fair Florence, than from these gardens. True, from higher elevations you may see more of the city, but from here it is backed by Fiesole and the Apennines, which give this view an especial charm, often wanting from loftier eyries. The circumstance, moreover, that the gardens, though strictly royal, are not fashionable, enhances your quiet enjoyment of them. If you desire to move among the upper thousand of Florence, you must go to the Cascine, for the Boboli gardens know them not. But this was not always the case. Many Grand Dukes and their Courts took their pleasure here, surrounded by their subjects. Here, too, Francis II. used to send his dogs to be aired, under the care of his wonderful dwarf, who was one of the curiosities of Florence. The dogs, on these occasions, were tricked out in lace frills, earrings, and rosettes, while the baby dogs, or puppies, were

---

And, with sledge-hammer shock,
Thunder down on the block—
Dash it,
Smash it,
Crash it,
Mash it—
Till the whole, as it must,
Is shiver'd and crusht
Into mere atoms of icy-cold dust.

carried in baskets lined with white satin, to the great admiration and envy of many mammas. The scene forms the subject of a very curious picture by Empoli, in the possession of William Spence, Esq., a copy of which has been made for our Queen, and is preserved in the royal collection.* No sights of this kind are now to be seen in the Boboli gardens; you will, however, see pleasant faces and happy children, tended by nurses, for this is one of their favourite playing-grounds.

But while these gardens assume their spring robes, those around Florence are, if possible, even more beautiful; for where, in all Italy, will you see lovelier gardens than those in the neighbourhood of that city? Often, when conducted by kind friends to see the art treasures in some charming villa near Florence, I have found myself hanging on a terrace, unheeding pictures and statues, to gaze on the glorious works of nature spread before me, framed by the waving outlines of the Apennines, while the ear was soothed by the sound of flowing

* It is worthy of note, that Mary de Medicis, daughter of the above Grand Duke, was indebted to a dwarf, whom she had adopted in her prosperity in Paris, for considerable alleviation from suffering when, as widow of Henry IV. of France, she was living in great poverty at Cologne. A very interesting account of this dwarf and his good deeds, will be found in D'Albané's *Nains Célèbres.*

and falling water from the brooks and fountains. Who, that has had the privilege of enjoying the hospitality of the famous Villa Mozzi-Spence, does not, in all probability, retain a more vivid remembrance of the glorious views from the *loggia* where Lorenzo the Magnificent loved to sit, than even of the fine artistic collection formed by the present proprietor of that most favoured residence? and the same may be said with reference to many other villas near Florence. The Villa Salviati, abounding in works of art and curiosities, which literally crowd the vast and numerous apartments—gifts, for the most part, to Mario and Grisi, to whom this villa belongs—is remembered by me more for its setting in terraced gardens, and for the views from these, than for its art treasures; with, however, let me add, one exception. This is a portrait of Grisi, representing her in the fulness of her beauty, pronounced to be the best likeness of that long regnant queen of song. It hangs, as is fitting, in Mario's study.

From Florence and its joyous villas we must now part; but before leaving Italy, let me ask you to accompany me to Pistoia, near which town I spent some days on bidding farewell to the Val Arno. I am the more inclined to solicit your com-

panionship, because Pistoia is not so well known to English travellers as it deserves to be; and because it possesses residential advantages which must commend themselves to many families who desire to winter in Italy.

I am indebted for my acquaintance with this interesting old city and its vicinity, to an American gentleman who occupies a villa on the lower slopes of the Apennines near Pistoia. With kindness, that will long be gratefully remembered, he requested me to make his villa my home, adding to its domestic pleasures his companionship as guide, for which his intimate knowledge of the country peculiarly fitted him. Thus the pain of leaving Florence was somewhat alleviated; for when I left that city, I settled down for a few days within view of its towers.

'You will find my villa,' said my friend, 'on the summit of the Colle Gigliato, or lilied hill;' and with more fidelity than often appertains to these poetical names, the hill was literally golden with lilies, reminding me of Wordsworth's lines:—

> I wandered, lonely as a cloud
> That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
> When all at once I saw a crowd,
> A host of golden daffodils.

Here, then, was my home for a few too brief

happy days. Beneath the villa, at a distance of about two miles, was Pistoia, girded by old walls, set in the midst of the rich plain, extending from the Serravalle, where the Apennines curve and form an amphitheatre, to Florence, twenty-three miles distant. Immediately behind the villa rose the mountains, the lower slopes covered with vineyards, olive-groves, and corn-fields, surmounted by rugged forests, climbing far up their summits. Wonderfully beautiful were the sunsets here. The long range of the Apennines, peak after peak, changed from deep purple to molten gold, and then quickly faded to tender rose, delicate violet, and sombre lead colour; for here there is but little twilight:

> The sun's rim dips, the stars rush out;
> At one stride comes the dark.

And while this glorious scene passes before you, making mountain and plain one vast rainbow, the air is vocal with cicalas and innumerable frogs, which bellow and bark with a vigour of utterance which leads you to suppose that they have attained the desire of the frog in the fable, and are not only bull-frogs, but as big as bulls.

But let us take a stroll through Pistoia. Few places in the north of Italy have played a more important part in the middle ages than this city.

Read the history of that period, and when you look at the size of Pistoia, it will remind you of a terrier always ready to do battle, and never having enough of fighting. For ages, it was always at war, either on its own account, or as an ally of other cities. The Tuscans were fully as turbulent within their cities and towns as the ancient Greeks, whom they resembled in many characteristics. But in no feature is the parallel more striking than in the hereditary dislike, amounting almost to hatred, that the respective peoples felt for each other.

On many occasions Pistoia suffered fearfully from sieges. That of 1345, when she was besieged by Florence, Lucca, and Siena, combined, surpassed all others in misery and horror. Dino Campagni has drawn a terrible picture of the events on that occasion. To increase its power, he dwells long and lovingly on the beauty and fertility of the surrounding country, the flourishing condition of Pistoia before the siege, and its handsome inhabitants, and then proceeds to tell us that the land became a howling wilderness, and the city a heap of ruins. The distress was such, that the citizens were reduced to eat human flesh; and those who loathingly turned from such food and left the city, were seized by the enemy, frightfully mutilated, and laid

at the city gates, in order that those within the walls might see them. Looking at the quiet city, and all the beauty that ripples up, in waving vines and fruitful orchards, to its very walls, you can indeed hardly realise the fact that, during centuries, fierce and cruel battles raged here; the fair plain being the frequent battle-ground of Luccese, Pisans, Pistoians, and Sienese, where the great war captains, Castruccio and Castracane, fought, and where Uguccione della Fagiula, who is said to have devoured two cities at a meal, acquired renown.*

The old city, however, rose again; and, despite more hard knocks, still retains many remarkable objects of art. The Duomo, Baptistery, and Palazzo Pretorio, are especially interesting. In the latter building, the arms of the former Podestàs and Prætors have recently been restored. They are on the walls of the inner court, and are so numerous and quaint, that an antiquary fond of heraldry would probably linger long before them. But even more curious is the representation of the great Pistoian hero Grandonio. Mythical, it is to be appre-

* When deputies came from various parts of Italy, to do honour to the commemoration at Florence of the sixth centenary of Dante's birth, Victor Emmanuel, who received the deputies, exclaimed—'Gentlemen, had you thus met during the poet's life, the piazza of Santa Croce would soon have been crimson with blood!'

hended, for we are told that he was no less than seven and a half *braccia* high, or about fifteen feet. You will seek vainly in chronicles for this hero, who is said to have conquered the Balearic islands in 1202; but all scepticism respecting his existence must cease, when you contemplate his life-size portrait, and his iron mace with a pine-apple top, which was so much prized by the Pistoians, that for many years it was kept carefully repaired at the expense of the town.

The painting of this giant is in green fresco, and if it be like what he was, he must have been awful to behold, and terrible to his enemies. Beneath are these lines:—

Grandonio son del popol Pistojese,
Che ambe Le Maioriche acquistai
Per forza d'armi e con Ingegno assai,
Facendo a tutti mia opra Palése.
MCCII.

If you are curious to know more, local guides will feed you with many legends respecting Grandonio's deeds; and, as the Pistoians are very proud of their fifteen foot man of war, you will do well to give no utterance to your doubts respecting his existence in the flesh. Indeed, the modern Pistoians are rather given to place faith in heroes and saints, however doubtful their existence and power may be. On

the evening of my arrival at my friend's villa, looking from the balcony when night fell, I saw the Duomo of Pistoia ringed with fire; presenting in minature, and very effectively, the illumination of St. Peter's in Rome. Enquiring the cause, I was told that the illumination was in honour of St. Atto of Pistoia; whose body, which is preserved in the cathedral, was exposed, the day before, in front of the high altar, in order to arrest heavy rain which, it was feared, would injure the crops. The rain having suddenly ceased, the Pistoians evinced their gratitude and faith by illuminating their cathedral.

The small city was all astir with a fair that was going on at the time of our visit, to the great delight of the younger portion of the inhabitants. At some booths, pistols made in Pistoia were sold; but though the city has long manufactured this weapon, practice has not been followed by perfection, for the pistols are far from being neat specimens of the gunmaker's craft. The principal objects exposed for sale were more for the body than the mind, but literature was not entirely absent. On small stalls cheap books and tracts were to be found; and, in order to attract attention to these, large oil-paintings, representing sensational scenes

described in the books and tracts, were hung over the booths. The plan evidently answered, for many who came to gaze at the pictures, purchased the literary wares; and I therefore throw out the suggestion to publishers of sensational novels, whether it might not increase the sale of these literary fungi, if men were sent through the metropolis, bearing pictorial representations of the exciting scenes in the works. Judging by the advertisements of this description of unwholesome literature, some publishers would not, probably, object to push the sale of such books by means of locomotive illustrations of their contents. But we must not forget, when writing of literature in connection with Pistoia, that the Tuscan poetess laureate, Maria Maddalena Morelli, was born here in 1740. She was admitted member of the Society of Arcadians in Rome; and, as La Corilla, was crowned in the Capitol. But her poetry was not appreciated by the Romans; and, what even distressed her more was, that her verses were frequently severely lashed by Pasquin. The Pistoians, however, cherish her memory, and preserve her laureate crown in one of their churches.

The modern Pistoians inherit the reputation of their ancestors for beauty. Among the women in the

fair, were many possessing great personal attractions; which they endeavoured, but vainly, to enhance by wearing gaudy dresses, ponderous earrings, and massive coral necklaces. For anything in the form of picturesque costume you will look in vain; and not only here, but unfortunately in almost all towns in northern Italy; the dress of the peasants presenting very rarely any characteristic features. And now that the women in Normandy have, with few exceptions, substituted for their quaint and often picturesque head-dresses a man's cotton nightcap,* we must not expect, in this utilitarian age, to find Italian peasants in the picturesque costumes of their ancestors.

The excursions around Pistoia are of the most varied nature. If adventurous, and blessed with stout legs, you may explore the breezy heights of the Apennines, or wander for miles through the neighbouring forests, with babbling companions by

* At Falaise, the birthplace of William the Conqueror, there are now manufactured many thousands of cotton nightcaps annually, for the day wear of the Norman women. Had the fair Arlotte worn one of these ugly head coverings, we should not, perhaps, have had a Norman conqueror, for we may well doubt whether the Devil Duke Robert would have been captivated by a girl thus capped. A man in a cotton nightcap is, as most ladies will admit, far from prepossessing in appearance: how great a spoiler it is of a pretty woman you have only to go to Normandy to see.

your side in the form of brooks; not panting with thirst, but ever full, and singing as they flow of copious springs welling from the mountain sides. This scenery furnished Salvator Rosa with many subjects. You may remember, when he was living in Florence how, when his susceptible spirits were dashed by melancholy, he was accustomed to repair to the studio of his friend and brother-painter, Lorenzo Lippi, and force him to leave his easel to wander with him in the forests on the slopes of the Apennines; and often, so far and long were these walks, that they were indebted to a monastery for a night's shelter. For to this painter wild scenes were a delight; and you have only to look at his pictures to see how his soul revelled in forest scenery. On Dante, forests seem to have had a very depressing effect. One of the saddest scenes in his immortal poem is laid in a forest, and the idea of being lost in dense woods, evidently, as appears in his 'Inferno,' filled his soul with horror. Goethe, on the other hand, had an intense love for the Apennines and their forests. 'In his 'Letters from Italy,' he says, I never gaze on these mountains, but my interest in forests, rocks, and stones again revives. I feel as did Antæus of old, who found himself endowed with new strength as often as

he was brought into fresh contact with his mother earth.

One day we went across the country, steeplechase fashion, by Catiline's tower, to which allusion has been made in the early part of this work, and on, over the shoulder of an Apennine, to the ancient castle of Serravalle; built, as its name implies, at the closing in, or head, of the valley. We are greatly indebted to the quarrels and plundering propensities of the lords of the middle ages for much picturesqueness. Not to please our eye did they rear their castles on nearly inaccessible heights; but, happily, the sites are generally precisely those that would be selected by an artist. And, as we gaze on the crumbling walls of the grand old buildings, we hear in fancy the feet of Time rustling through the wreck of races and dynasties.

To adequately realise the abounding wealth of this part of Tuscany, you should ascend to the castle of Serravalle. It stands nearly on the crest of the pass between the plain of Pistoia and the valley extending to Lucca. Fold within fold of swelling hills—the insteps of the Apennines—appear to the north and west; while below, the valleys and plains seem like great natural storehouses of fruits and vegetables; the vineyards and corn-fields

being interspersed with villas and cottages, farm-houses, and churches with graceful campaniles. Hope not to see all this glory and beauty from the windows of a railway carriage, should you journey in one from Florence to Lucca, for the train dashes through a tunnel beneath the crest of Serravalle. Indeed, nowhere does railway travelling war more with the enjoyment of scenery than here; and you feel, as you see the train wind in and out of this wealth of beauty, and zigzag up the Apennines, that to travel by it would be to compress what may be made a day of great happiness into an hour.

Another excursion was to Celli; said to be, and with great probability, one of the finest estates in Italy. The villa, of vast size, is situated on the slopes of the Apennines, about four miles south of Pistoia, and is approached by an avenue of great length, lined by a variety of handsome trees. Here, released from the responsibilities and anxieties accompanying the high office of Chancellor of England, lives, during a portion of the year, Lord Westbury, who has recently purchased this Italian paradise. With great kindness, the ex-chancellor gave orders that we should be shown all that was remarkable; but here again nature far surpasses art,

all appertaining to the villa being as nothing, compared to the grandeur and beauty of the surrounding scenery. Around the house stretch for miles long vistas of pleasure-grounds; the greensward is studded with clumps of rare trees, grouped among others more common, but not less beautiful, with so high an art that all trace of art is concealed. Where trees do not occupy the ground, bright beds of carefully-tended flowers, jets of water springing from elegant and picturesque fountains, orange trees loaded with fruit, and flowering shrubs covered with blossoms, throw just the proper amount of life into the fair picture. The camellias are of extraordinary size, resembling trees more than shrubs; and, at the time of our visit, they were literally all ablaze with scarlet flowers.

By skilful management, the waters from the upper Apennines are led into a large lake, forming dark blue winding creeks, or lying calm and still under the shelter of the woods, which in many places overshadow it, and float their lowest leaves on the surface. The view across this fine breadth of water, looking up the slopes, is extremely beautiful; leading the eye from calm repose to the swelling mountains, gathering strength as they rise, glowing with rich hues, and crowned, in many

places, in spring time, with diadems of sparkling snow.

In a land of such loveliness, flowing, too, with milk and honey, life, you will say, may be enjoyed. You are right. If blessed with the *mens sana in corpore sano*, and feeling with George Herbert, that

> My mind to me a kingdom is,

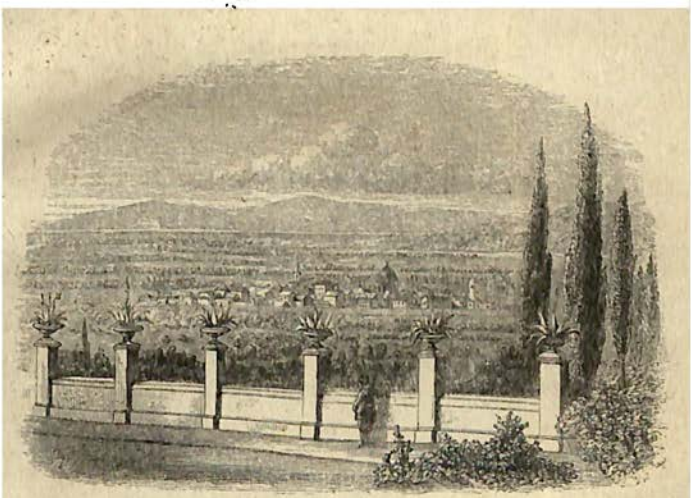
there are few localities on God's fair earth where, with a limited income, you could live more agreeably than near Pistoia. And to those who desire to reside in Italy, and have not the means of living in Florence, Pistoia presents great advantages. House rent is low, provisions are at least one third less in price than they are in the capital, and you can enjoy there many of the *agrémens* of that city, as it is accessible by railway in little more than one hour.

To a man who cannot live happily out of the torrent and cataract of progress, Pistoia would probably prove dull; but if you be of Wordsworth's opinion, that

> The world is too much with us; early and late
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers,

you would find it a place where life would be full of quiet enjoyment.

This I know, and remember well, that it was with great regret that I passed for the last time down the Colle Gigliato, and thought that, ere the close of day, I should be on the north side of the purple Apennines.



Pistoia, from the Colle Gigliato.

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